

30p
EVERY
WEEKDAY

When journalists go to war *media times* pages 38-41 **FREE BOOKS** FOR SCHOOLS token page 26

BY MICHAEL EVANS, ANNA BLUNDY IN MOSCOW
AND MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

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Hague's aide puts truckers in a spin

WILLIAM HAGUE made a pre-emptive strike in the Newark by-election campaign yesterday but had to share star billing with the Tories' first woman communications chief, Amanda Platell, the former Fleet Street Editor, appeared at Mr Hague's side in public for the first time since her surprise appointment as head of news and media.

The by-election, to be held next month, follows the conviction of the Labour MP Fiona Jones for falsifying her election expenses declaration. She was expelled from the House of Commons, leading to a by-election the Tories have to win it Mr Hague is to avoid another welter of speculation about his leadership of the Conservative Party.

First on the agenda for the four-hour visit was a delegation of road hauliers objecting to the 10 per cent increase in diesel duty. Miss Platell, 41, described as Mr Hague's best photo-opportunity in the headlines that accompanied her appointment, was an instant hit. "Who are you? Are you Mr Hague's secretary?" one of the truckers asked. Before Miss Platell could flash one of her well-honed smiles, another driver hastily intervened. "No, it's the woman who was in the papers. That spin-doctor."

A few moments later Miss Platell had secured the prom-



Andrew Pierce, back at The Times after a short absence and back on the campaign trail, joined William Hague as the Tory leader stole a march on the other parties

ise, at least from the assembled overall, that they would be voting Conservative in the by-election. "Pity you're not standing," one added for good measure.

From there it was on to a charity-run village playgroup threatened by the minimum wage. The running costs of the Second Calverton Pre-School Playgroup, formed in 1971, have soared by £5,000 a year. Staff have offered to sacrifice their holiday pay, but the group will be closed within five months unless alternative money is found.

Mr Hague was in his element. Ignoring the old adage that politicians should steer clear of animals and babies, he stepped straight into the sandpit and pushed children down the slide under the watchful eye of Miss Platell.

While staying in the back-

ground, talking to the parents, she nevertheless kept an eye on the most photogenic children for the photographers. Within 30 minutes the Tory roadshow, complete with Sebastian Coe, Mr Hague's chief of staff, had swept on to another appointment guaranteed to ensure maximum publicity: the local newspaper offices just before deadline. Only a calamitous wedding ceremony in which the bridegroom hobbled down the aisle in a plaster cast, with a bridesmaid in a similar condition, denied him the main headline.

New Labour's spin-doctors had obviously been at work again, Miss Platell was heard to mutter. However, The William and Amanda Roadshow left wreathed in smiles, with more cameras to record the event. It is a show that could run and run.



Keeping an eye on the main chance: Amanda Platell on the by-election trail yesterday

NEWS IN BRIEF

Animal exporters face tougher rules

The live export of animals to the Continent is to be subject to tighter controls. The Ministry of Agriculture is to send its own vets to check animal welfare, rather than exporters choosing and paying for their own vet. Vets must ensure that animals are fit for travel and that exporters are abiding by rules on rest periods and space.

Elliot Morley, Minister for Farm Animal Welfare, said: "The Government cannot lawfully ban the live export trade because of EU single market rules. But the Government is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards." However, animal welfare groups expressed concern that the rules would not come into force before the summer peak of the trade.

Salmon fishing curbed

New bylaws to conserve spring salmon stocks in England and Wales have been approved by the Government. Anglers will be required to release all salmon they catch before June 16. Neismen fishing in estuaries and coastal waters will have a start date of June 1. However, the Welsh Office said an exception will be made for the coracle net fisheries on the River Towy in South Wales because of their "unique cultural and historical significance".

'Schools hoard £500m'

Head teachers are hoarding £500 million under the Local Management of Schools policy inherited from the last Government, while experienced teachers are being sacked to cut budgets, the conference of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers was told. The union called on the Government to rethink the policy, which it blames for the sacking of 8,500 teachers in the first half of this decade.

Refugee detained

José Da Conceição, 32, a refugee from Angola, who admitted the manslaughter of David Phillips, 42, three days after escaping from a secure psychiatric unit in West London, was ordered to be detained under the Mental Health Act by the Old Bailey. He pleaded guilty on the ground of diminished responsibility. Da Conceição, a paranoid schizophrenic, stabbed Mr Phillips with a carving knife after discovering that his victim had been given his old room.

Couple were murdered

A couple whose bodies were found in the living room of their flat in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, were murdered, police said yesterday. The bodies of Derek McKell, 33, and his girlfriend Lorraine Richardson, 46, were discovered by Mr McKell's mother on Wednesday. Detectives think the unemployed couple may have known their killer as there were no signs of forced entry and nothing appeared to have been stolen from the flat.

Rugby runaway hunt

Half of the players on an African rugby team who have gone missing in Britain are now officially listed as illegal immigrants. A dozen players from the Ivory Coast under-19s, who went missing in west Wales after their team finished 26th of 32 participating in a World Cup rugby contest, failed to join their team-mates flying out of Gatwick Airport yesterday. Police and immigration officials have been searching for the five forwards and seven backs.

Police follow up programme on Lawrence five

POLICE investigating the murder of Stephen Lawrence were following up new lines of inquiry last night after the five suspects broke their public silence about the killing.

One of them, David Norris, said he was in the area on the night of the murder, staying at his girlfriend's house. Previously he had refused to give any details of his whereabouts. Two others, Neil and Jamie Acourt, said that they carried knives before Stephen was stabbed to death in Eltham, southeast London, in 1993.

The disclosures came in interviews

Michael Harvey reports on the TV interviews with suspects

with the men on *Tonight*, a new ITV current-affairs programme. Mr Norris, 22, who lives with his mother in Chislehurst, three miles from the scene of the murder, told the interviewer Martin Bashir that he was at his then girlfriend's house about half-a-mile from Well Hall Road, where Stephen was stabbed by a bus stop. Mr Norris is one of two of the men who in theory could still be tried for the murder after the original case

against him and Neil Acourt was thrown out by a magistrate for lack of evidence. Jamie Acourt, Luke Knight and Gary Dobson were acquitted at the Old Bailey two years ago after a private prosecution by the Lawrence family failed. They cannot be tried again for the same crime.

Bashir interviewed the five men separately at a neutral location. Neil and Jamie Acourt said that they were at home together on the night of the

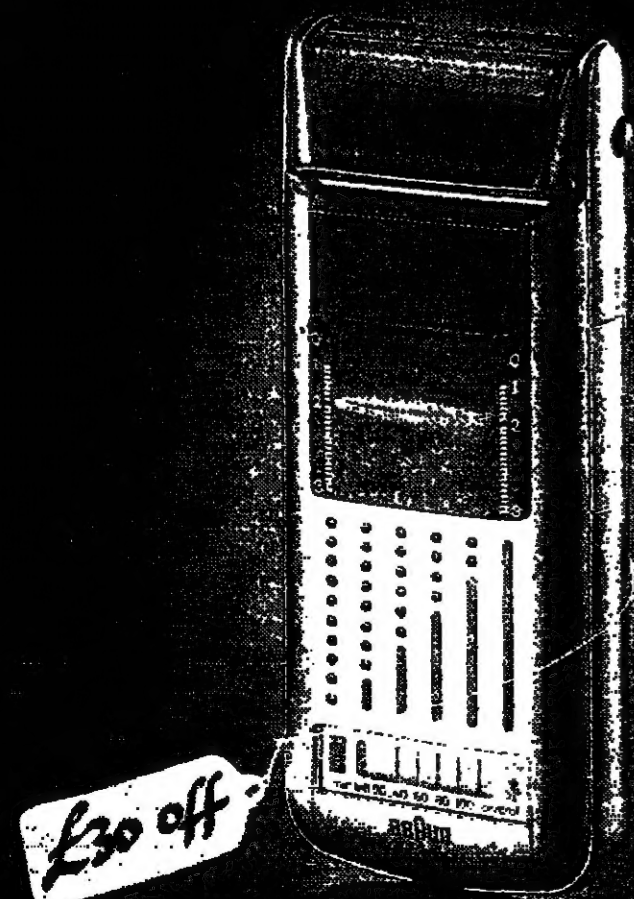
murder, playing computer games with their mother as a witness. They give conflicting stories about when they had heard about the murder. Jamie Acourt, 22, said he did not hear about it until the next day while Neil, 23, said he heard about it that night from someone who called at their house.

Gary Dobson, 23, said that he was out with his family having dinner and then later visited the Acourts at

their home a short distance from the murder scene. He also said that he heard about the murder that night from a third person, Luke Knight, 22, said he was at home in bed.

All five were asked directly for the first time: "Did you kill Stephen Lawrence?" All five protested their innocence. Mr Dobson said that the five were a group of "little bastards" on the estate, adding they were "rascals, loveable rogues". Neil Acourt accepted that he had a reputation: "If someone put trouble my way I would not stand for it, simple as that."

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Owen scores with £1m book deal

Publishers take
a gamble on
England star's
future, report
Adrian Lee and
Elizabeth Judge

MICHAEL OWEN has signed sport's most lucrative publishing deal: more than £1 million for three books.

The successful bidders admitted yesterday that they had taken a gamble on the enduring form, fitness and appeal of the teenage football prodigy. His third book — an autobiography — will not be published until after the 2002 World Cup, when he will be all of 22.

The deal also shows remarkable faith in the England team's ability to qualify for both the Euro 2000 championships, on the back of which the second book will be published, and the World Cup.

Leading publishers had scrambled to sign Owen, the Liverpool striker. A spokeswoman for HarperCollins, which won the race, said yesterday: "He is quite simply the biggest sports star of the moment. He has a fantastic following and we believe he has lasting appeal."

The payments to Owen, who will be given "some help" in writing his life story, will be phased over four years. Even if his career ends this week, he will receive the full amount. The fee is thought to be the largest paid to any teenage author. Few authors from any field can match it, although Jeffrey Archer received £22 million for a three-book deal.

Since the publication of *Fever Pitch*, by Nick Hornby, in 1993, there has been a surge in demand for sports books. David Luxton, of the specialist bookshop Sports Pages, said: "People will buy a book about their favourite player irrespective of how good it is. But the best sellers are the ones with a decent story, like *Addicted*, by Tony Adams, which sold enormously."

He thought the sum paid by HarperCollins represented sound business sense and that Owen's autobiography would undoubtedly become a best seller. But he said of the growing trend among young sports stars to publish their life stories: "The readership is not stupid. They know that if they wait there must be more to come."

Michael Earley, the publishing director of Methuen, said: "Sports books are a thriving market, but this is a huge risk. You generally see them contracted for only one book. They must believe that he has a future."

Owen's representatives approached several publishers after the World Cup, inviting them to pitch for the contract.



One for the book: Michael Owen, right, was on England duty with Alan Shearer, left, and David Seaman yesterday, showing off the new national strip at the NEC in Birmingham

HarperCollins has previously published autobiographies by Adams, the Arsenal defender and recovering alcoholic, Ian Botham and Nigel Mansell. Adams's book is now the best-selling football autobiography.

Owen's first book, on football skills, will appear this summer in conjunction with a six-part BBC television series. A scrapbook featuring his early

life will be published next year, to be followed finally by the autobiography, in summer 2002. It leaves the way clear for part two of his life story to be published later, if his career continues to flourish.

Autobiographies by footballers are notoriously bland and the quotation attributed to Owen yesterday did nothing to break the mould. He said: "I'm very excited to be work-

ing with HarperCollins. It's a great opportunity to pass on the skills I've learnt to young footballers everywhere and to tell my own story."

The deal will boost the millionaire status of Owen, who has a series of well-paid advertising contracts. According to one survey, he is Britain's 17th richest sportsman.

The bestselling sports book is the autobiography of Dickie Bird, the cricket umpire, which sold 500,000 copies last year. However, it may well be overshadowed by the life story of Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, which is published later this year. He is said to have signed a £1 million deal.

It's still football, after a fashion

By JOANNA BALE

AS Michael Owen, Alan Shearer and David Seaman modelled the new England kit yesterday, thousands of young fans screamed with excitement at seeing their heroes, but many parents silently groaned in anticipation at having to fork out another £50 for replica outfits.

Craig Winterborne, whose Joshua, aged 7, was sporting an old-style England shirt at the event at the Birmingham NEC, said: "Josh got this strip for Christmas but now it's obsolete. He's already asked for the new strip but I've told him that he can save up his pocket money because we can't afford it."

Richard Moore, of Umbro, manufacturer of the new kit under a £50 million sponsorship deal, defended its two-year lifespan after the unveiling for the BBC's *Match of the Day* show: "It's now an industry norm for kits to be changed on a two-year cycle. We have to change them periodically to keep up with technological changes."

Although styled in a retro 1960s fashion with a simple round neck line, the new strip, according to Umbro, is the most technologically advanced ever. The shirt is made from Microfibre, which, says Umbro, is "a highly durable and synthetic material that is lightweight and soft to the touch". To give players the edge in humid conditions, "the process of moisture management is helped by application of a Vapatech coating which draws moisture from the skin". The kit goes on sale on April 23, St George's Day.

'I hurled the clock against the wall. I was so gutted'

Addicted
by Tony Adams
CollinsWillow

Arsenal defender charts descent into alcoholism, redemption and how those "donkey" gibes hurt.

"So many carrots were thrown at me that I could have opened a fruit and veg stall. One caught me on the ear which was really swollen after the game."

Vinnie: The Autobiography
by Vinnie Jones
Headline Book Publishing

Football's self-styled hard man proves that you don't have to be any good to write a bestseller.

"So I went straight back into the toilets taking the clock with me and hurled it against the back wall. It smashed to smithereens. I wasn't being a spoiled brat or anything. I was just so gutted I had the hump."

Harry Redknapp: An Autobiography
CollinsWillow

West Ham manager



Vinnie Jones: hard man turned actor and author



Masters of style: Ron Atkinson and Ruud Gullit

has writing style similar to Vinnie's.

"I was just like I always had been. Still getting the hump when we got beat and taking everything too personally."

Glenn Hoddle: My 1998 World Cup Story
Andre Deutsch

Pre-sacking ramblings

of the England coach. Gazza, Eileen, Beckham, missed penalties — why none of it was his fault — and a strange bonding session with a BBC interviewer: "Then, as I walked into the station I saw Ray Stubbs. He was just about to interview me. We did not

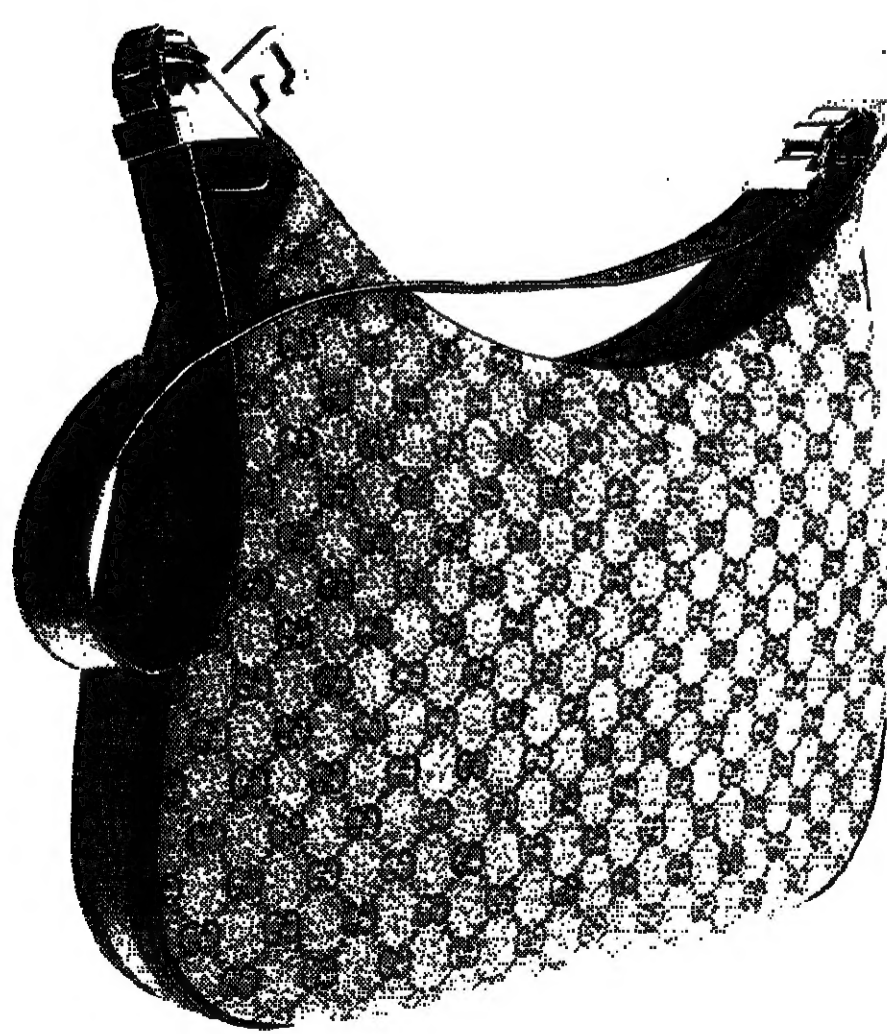
say anything. We just embraced each other. For all the sadness, it was a wonderful moment."

Kevin Keegan: My Autobiography
Little Brown

From Scunthorpe to Geordie icon, how he fell off his bike in Superstars and the secret of football's dodgiest hairdo: "Just before I left for Germany, a hairdresser friend remarked that a perm might suit me and that it would be easier to maintain after training and all the showers I took ... That hairstyle set a trend in football."

Ruud Gullit: My Autobiography
Century

Flamboyant exponent of sexy football is a turn-off in print, despite literary allusions: "Well, as a young boy I used to like watching Scrooge, so we have looked at my Christmas past, my Christmas present and my Christmas future."



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BALKANS WAR: POLITICS OF CONFLICT

Yugoslav borders have been shaped by the hand of history. From the turmoil of 1914 to present times, the region has been racked by rivalries

1914: SERBIA ON THE EVE OF WAR



Serbia achieved independence in 1878. After the 1912 and 1913 Balkan wars Serbia occupied Kosovo, Macedonia and part of Thrace. The Austro-Hungarian Empire included Croatia, but after 1908 Austria also annexed Bosnia, causing lingering Serb resentment. In 1914 Gavrilo Princip, right, a Serb nationalist, sent shockwaves around the world when he assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, sparking the First World War.



1918: THE NEW STATE OF THE SOUTH SLAVS



Yugoslavia under Tito, right, had the same international boundaries as the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, established after the First World War. Keeping the separate states or "republics" that existed in the region, Tito created another by separating Macedonia from southern Serbia. He also gave autonomous status to Vojvodina and Kosovo to reduce Serb influence in Federal Yugoslavia.



1992: YUGOSLAVIA FRAGMENTS



Tito's Yugoslavia started to break up in 1991, with wars of independence in Slovenia and Croatia, which were recognised by the EU in 1991. Macedonia and Bosnia followed, but Montenegro remained with rump Yugoslavia. After Bosnia declared independence war broke out in 1992, lasting until 1995. The Muslim President Izetbegovic, right, led the fight for a united Bosnia against Serb separatists.



'Ethnic cleansing' plans laid years ago

THE discovery of a detailed Serb plan to drive ethnic Albanians out of Kosovo — devised by Belgrade long before Nato airstrikes began — shows that the blueprint for President Milosevic's ethnic cleansing was drawn up shortly before the Second World War by a Serb nationalist responsible for triggering the First.

The chilling document — codenamed The Horseshoe Plan — came to light last week when a copy was leaked to Joschka Fischer, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, by the government of an unidentified country bordering Serbia.

Le Monde reported yesterday, dated February 20 and in Serbo-Croat, the substantial document, believed to have been stolen, shows Belgrade planned the deportation of ethnic Albanians, particularly those in Kosovo's urban centres, at least a month before the Nato bombing began.

The plan proves that the Serb actions were premeditated and not a reaction to the airstrikes, as claimed by Belgrade. It appears obvious that President Milosevic never had any intention of respecting the October 1998 peace agreement made with Richard Hol-

brooke, the American envoy, but was simply delaying allied airstrikes while he continued to manoeuvre Serb forces into position around Kosovo.

The document is significant, too, because of the written evidence it would provide against the Serb leader should he be brought before an international war crimes tribunal.

The German Government has confirmed that it is studying the document, but has yet to decide whether to make it public. "Operation Horseshoe began in Kosovo in November 1998... It shows that the Yugoslav Army and police had

Milosevic expulsion policy drawn up before war, writes Susan Bell

planned, and then started, to drive people out of certain parts of Kosovo, from November until the Rambouillet negotiations began," Rudolf Schenping, the German Defence Minister, told *Le Monde*.

During the France peace talks, Serb repression in Kosovo was reduced. However, when the talks failed in February, ethnic cleansing was relaunched. The Horseshoe Plan has its

roots in a document written more than 60 years ago by Vaso Cubrilovic — a Serb academic who held the dubious distinction of being the youngest of the seven assassins responsible for the death of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, triggering the First World War. Sentenced at the age of 17 to 16 years in prison for treason, Cubrilovic was released after the Austro-Hungarian Empire's collapse in

1918. He became a distinguished historian and a professor of philosophy at the University of Belgrade before serving as a minister under President Tito. He died in 1990, when 94.

His pamphlet, *The Expulsion of the Albanians by the Serbs*, published in 1937, advocated "using the brute force of an organised state" to drive as many Albanians [Albanians] as possible from Kosovo towards Albania and Turkey. The scorched-earth tactics of Mr Milosevic echo methods recommended by his mentor, who proposed "secretly burn-

ing down Albanian villages and city quarters". Cubrilovic's description of "the Albanian problem" has overtones of the run up to Hitler's Final Solution as he discusses the best way to systematically persecute ethnic Albanians to make it "intolerable" for them to remain in Kosovo.

He advocates crushing any local uprisings, but gives a warning against using the Yugoslav Army, preferring gangs (one is immediately reminded of Milosevic's feared warlord Arkan) and forces from neighbouring states. (Again, one thinks of the Macedonian

guards who this week evicted 30,000 refugees from a makeshift camp) who must "secretly be given support".

The Horseshoe Plan appears to have dispelled any lingering pacifist doubts among Western leaders, many of whom seemed unable to believe, despite the precedent of Bosnia, that at the end of the 20th century a European leader would carry out such a plan using methods that differ very little from those outlined before the Second World War.

Simon Jenkins, page 22
Letters, page 23

Supporters deny Rugova has 'sold out' to Milosevic

AIDES to Ibrahim Rugova, Kosovo's unofficial ethnic Albanian "president", yesterday denied that he had cut a deal with President Milosevic in which the Belgrade regime might partition the province or at least keep it irrevocably within Serbia.

Having played second fiddle to the more radical Kosovo Liberation Army through the Rambouillet peace talks, Mr Rugova is re-emerging as one of the few glimmers of hope that there can still be a negotiated settlement, rather than the ground war between Yugoslavia and Nato that the KLA favours.

Nato officials and their Contact Group colleagues, however, have reacted with scepticism to the news that Mr Rugova — who at one time was feared to have been killed in the anarchy that engulfed Pristina following the airstrikes — is seeking a peaceful solution to Kosovo's almost intractable ethnic problems.

They have suggested that he has been forced to talk with Mr Milosevic, or even that their meeting on Serbian state television was somehow rigged with footage of their previous encounters.

But Adnan Marovci, Mr Rugova's self-declared chef-du-cabinet, has said in a telephone call from Pristina that Mr Rugova has been misrepresented in the Serbian press, which has claimed over the past few days that the ethnic Albanian is now close to Mr Milosevic's official position that airstrikes should end before state security forces withdraw from Kosovo.

"He hasn't said that at all," said Mr Marovci. "He is demanding the Serbs withdraw their forces from Kosovo immediately, quite apart from whether airstrikes end or not."

Kosovo's unofficial president could yet emerge as a vital peace broker, reports Tom Walker in Belgrade

Other Albanian sources have been puzzled by Mr Rugova's behaviour, and in particular by his use of English during the press conference last week that proved he was still alive. His party, the Democratic League for Kosovo (LDK), has tried for much of the past year to persuade their leader to speak English, to help raise his international profile. Mr Rugova, however, has shied away from the language of the information age, preferring French.

"He spoke English and I couldn't understand a word of what he was talking about," said one source. "That could well be where the confusion is coming from."

Serbian state media say Mr Rugova, his wife and two chil-

dren are being "protected" by the police in Pristina, but most diplomats regard him as being under house arrest. They fear that his appeals for meetings with Western leaders are being refused by Belgrade, which instead is trying to push him into making contacts with the Russians. State media has even suggested that Mr Rugova might fly to Moscow for talks with President Yeltsin.

Russian news agencies yesterday claimed that the Albanian was in Belgrade again, for a second meeting with Mr Milosevic. There were no pictures to confirm this on state television, however.

KLA representatives have said only that Mr Rugova will be "severely disciplined" if he does any deal without consult-

ing the guerrillas. Their new government-in-exile for Kosovo does not include the LDK.

Any agreement that allows Mr Milosevic to wriggle clear of international peacekeepers in Kosovo would put Mr Rugova in grave danger, Western security experts in Yugoslavia have admitted.

Ivica Dacic, spokesman for Mr Milosevic's Socialist Party, yesterday lauded Mr Rugova's "search for dialogue and a negotiated settlement".

Mr Rugova, a bespectacled and slightly ruffled academic whose trademark is a scarf wrapped round his neck, is a linguistics expert who studied in France. His father was executed by communists after they restored Kosovo to Yugoslav control under Tito. Despite his family background of violence, however, Mr Rugova has been a Gandhi-like leader, preaching a policy of non-cooperation with Belgrade and the establishment of parallel education and health systems.



Ibrahim Rugova, the ethnic Albanian leader, pictured during last month's peace talks in France, is believed by most observers to be under house arrest in Pristina

Dethroned prince dreams of glory

DESPITE the misspelling, a dirty brass placard announces a once grand presence: His Majesty's Legation: 1879-1916. The British Embassy has been closed for more than 80 years; since then, two world wars, the formation and finally the destruction of Yugoslavia have taken place.

The building is now a music academy, and from the faded terracotta building comes the haunting strains of a student playing Bottesini's *Turandotta* on the double bass. But the former embassy still remains: peeling, faded, ghostly, the beautiful Venetian tiled floors cracked, an important symbol of independence for the people of Cetinje.

This is the heart of independent Montenegro and the former capital city in the

Janine di Giovanni in Cetinje on the hopes of Montenegro

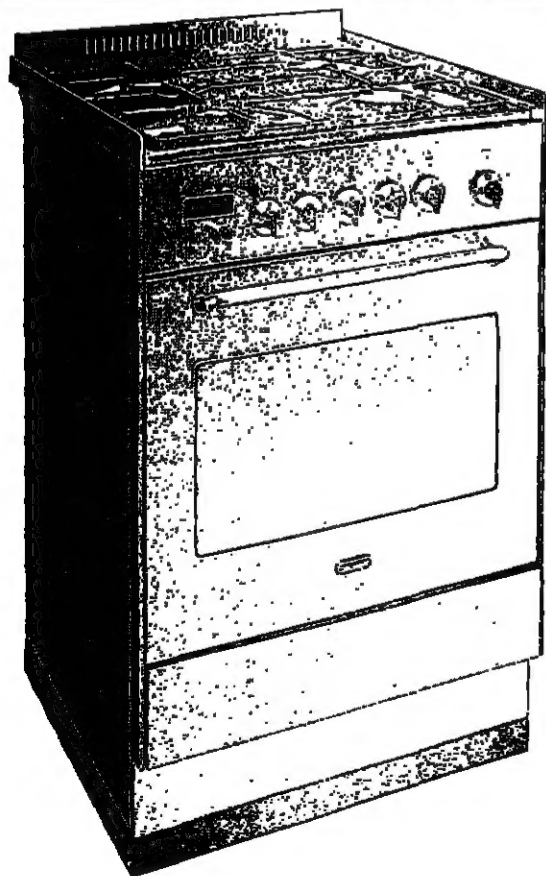
days when it was still a kingdom. Prince Nikola Petrovic-Njegos, the grandson of the last King of Montenegro, now an architect and a fierce advocate of a free Montenegro, spoke to *The Times* on the troubles of his country which may soon go the way of the other former Yugoslav republics, and eventually break away from Belgrade. "For ten years, we have been in the dictatorship of a nationalistic state which has prevented us from making a demo-

cratic transition and finding the way out of the old communist regime," he says. "It has forced the entire former Yugoslavia into absurd wars and it has locked them in a system of fear." He adds: "The number one problem here is Milosevic."

Prince Nikola believes that the biggest obstacle to the country's independence is President Milosevic's strength. "Because of the mistakes of the international community, Milosevic has managed to reunite the Serb people around him." Montenegro is important — it has Yugoslavia's only stretch of coastline and Mr Milosevic needs it, militarily and psychologically. Aleksandr Bercutian, a local historian says: "We Montenegrins do not have a romantic history. We have a tragic one."

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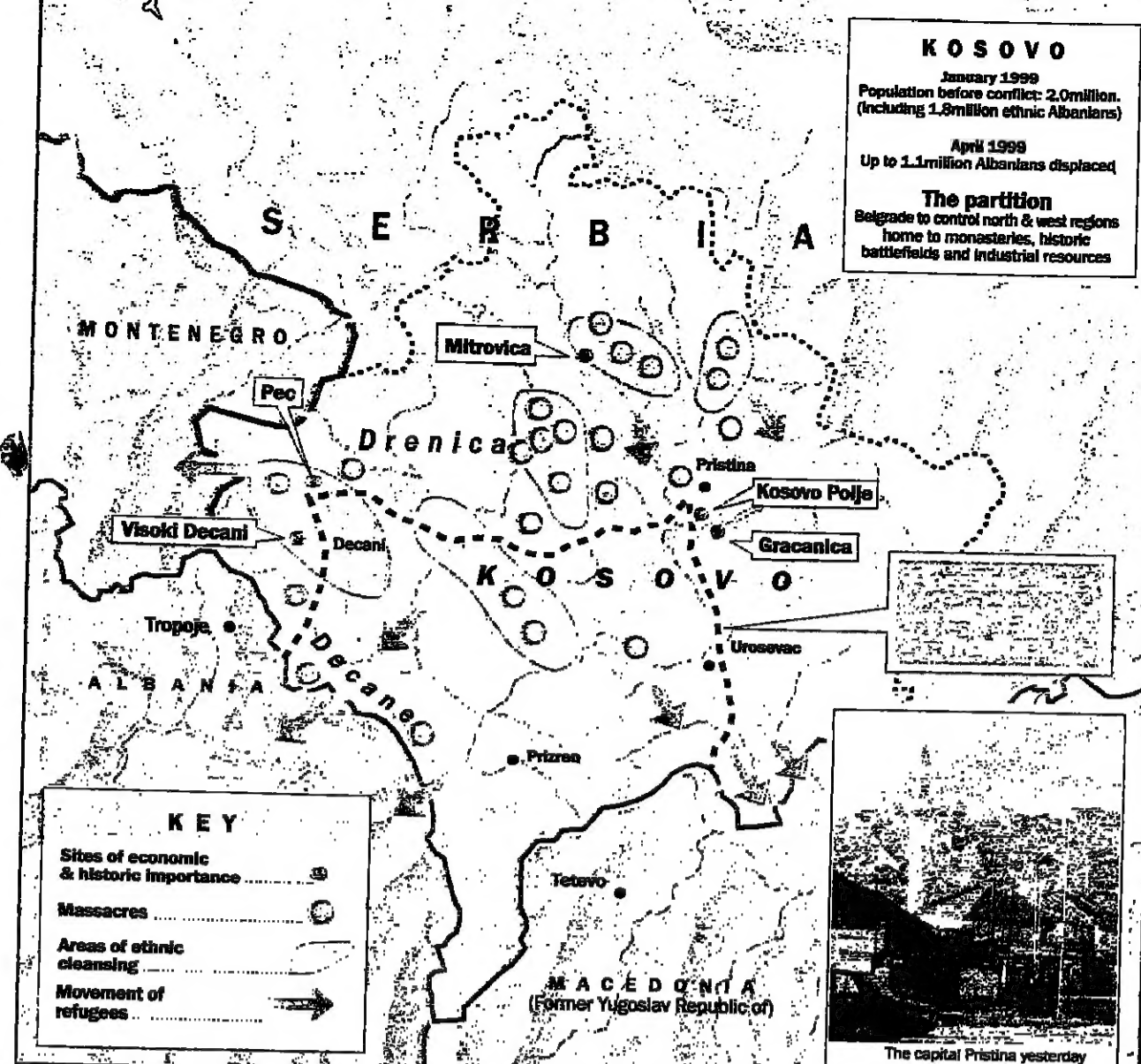
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BALKANS WAR: STRATEGY

1999: HOW BELGRADE COULD IMPOSE PARTITION



Nato anticipates Serb partition ruse

Serbia's aim to retain the best of Kosovo will meet stiff opposition, writes Charles Bremner in Brussels

AS NATO grinds down Serbia's forces and facilities, the West expects President Milosevic to spring a new peace gambit based on the partition of Kosovo. This has been seen as one of his aims since the international community started taking steps to halt the onslaught against the province's ethnic Albanians two years ago.

The supposed Serbian goal would be to split Kosovo in two, leaving Belgrade in control of the northern and eastern regions that are home to the ancient monasteries and battlefields that are deemed to be the cradle of Serbian culture, as well as the province's considerable mineral and coal resources. Western suspicions of Mr Milosevic's goal have been reinforced by the pattern of the Serbian purge of Albanians, which has focused on the north and west and Pristina, the capital.

The West is not ruling out the creation of an enclave to create a haven inside southern Kosovo, but it is now highly unlikely that it would accept partition. Agreement would amount to condoning the ethnic purge and would be seen as a humiliation for Nato in its new aim of returning the Albanian Kosovars to their homeland and ridding the whole province of Serbian regular

and paramilitary forces. In addition, partition along the supposed lines would leave a rump Kosovo that was economically unviable, say the experts. Belgrade would retain control over much of the wealth, including electricity production and deposits of zinc, nickel and coal that made Kosovo the richest province in terms of natural resources in the former Yugoslavia.

This would create conditions for merging with neighbouring Albania. The emergence of such a "Greater Albania" is seen as a strategic aim by Mr Milosevic as a way of sowing conflict and destabilising the Balkan region.

However, a prolonged bombing campaign and the prospect of a bloody ground war could shake Nato resolve enough to consider an offer that could cynically be passed off as a parallel to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Under the Dayton peace accord, the West effectively condoned the country's partition into a Croat-Muslim region and Serb region. According to one theory, Russia could back partition

and enter the peace arrangement as a guarantor.

Planners at the United States Defence Department have already sketched the demarcation line that they believe Mr Milosevic could seek to lay down. This would run from the Albanian border east to Decani, north to the outskirts of Pec, east along the main road to Pristina and then south past Urosvac to the Macedonian border.

Belgrade would control the main road links in the province as well as access to Macedonia and rich mining areas around Kosovska Mitrovica, northwest of Pristina, according to the Pentagon theory as reported by US media.

Serbia would retain key historic sites, such as the Patriarchate of Pec, the historic seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Visoki Decani monastery in Decani. It would also keep the Cracanica monastery and Kosovo Polje battlefield, southwest of Pristina, where the Serbs were defeated by the Turks in 1389. Belgrade's mythology deems this to be the birthplace of the Serbian fight-

ing soul and it is also the place where Mr Milosevic launched his personal crusade for power in 1987. Sent by Belgrade to quell demonstrations by ethnic Serbs, he incited greater nationalism there by promising to save them from the Albanians who had achieved demographic ascendancy in the province.

In this version of the map, Serbia would lose Prizren, which has holy sites. Some experts believe Belgrade could also demand a buffer zone along the whole Albanian frontier.

In the unlikely event that the allies accepted such a deal, Belgrade could be expected to attempt to retain southern Kosovo as an autonomous province, as outlined in the now-defunct Rambouillet plan, and he would probably seek to have it policed by an international military force that included Russia and other states outside Nato.

Bomb mishap: The US Air Force has launched an inquiry after a bomb was dropped on the tarmac at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire, yesterday as crews were loading a B1 bomber. It was not armed and did not explode. The weapon was a conventional bomb and not a cruise missile, a US spokeswoman at the base said. The area was evacuated for a time.

GERMANY GIVES DETAILS OF COVERT PLAN

Berlin: Germany yesterday revealed elements of what it said was Serbia's covert plan, Operation Horseshoe, to expel ethnic Albanians from Kosovo and said there was evidence that it had been drawn up six months before Nato began its air assault on Yugoslavia (Tony Paterson writes).

At a press conference in Bonn, Rudolf Scharping, the Defence Minister, presented photographic slides of four sketch maps containing the names of towns and villages which

displayed arrows representing Serbian army and police militia units progressively encircling Kosovo in a horseshoe-shaped pincer movement.

Herr Scharping said: "Operation Horseshoe provided clear evidence that President Milosevic had long been preparing the expulsions from Kosovo and that he had simply used the time gained by the Rambouillet peace talks to organise an army and police units for the campaign."

Nato faces long-term task as a protector

AT some point a substantial number of Nato troops will need to go into Kosovo. If they do not, the refugees will not go home. They might still return if the Nato forces have been rendered more acceptable to the Serbs by having neutral markings on their vehicles or by an accompaniment of Russian and Ukrainian troops. They will not go if there are only unarmed monitors to watch over them. That was the last plan and it failed.

It is not only the returning refugees who will want high-quality protection. So will the aid agencies providing assistance and all those who will be involved in the huge job of reconstruction. All this requires secure conditions.

The Rambouillet peace plan envisaged the introduction of about 28,000 troops as a protection force. Around 12,000 British, French and German troops are in Macedonia, where they have been preparing for this mission. They are currently involved in the refugee crisis.

This number was calculated with reference to the area to be covered, the nature of the terrain and internal communications, and the logistical problems. The damage inflicted by the Serb campaign against the Kosovan Albanians and the Nato campaign against the Serb units responsible may have affected the calculations but the new strategic situation involves the most important reason for a reassessment.

In the effort to get President Milosevic's signature, significant concessions were made to the Serbs — a provision for more than 5,000 Serb troops to stay in the province to patrol borders and assert sovereignty; and an undertaking that the Kosovo Liberation Army



Substantial numbers of troops will be needed in Kosovo whatever the future holds, writes Lawrence Freedman

fighters would be disarmed. Even while the negotiations were going on it was not hard to imagine how skirmishes between Serbs and Albanians could give the implementation force a serious headache if it was to preserve law and order while maintaining a reputation for impartiality.

Nato demands have now been revised to require all Serb forces to leave Kosovo and it is doubtful that the disarmament of the KLA is going to be quite so high a priority. Without any Serb military units in the area the peacekeeping task would obviously be simplified.

Two new requirements suggest themselves. First, there will be a need to guard the border of Kosovo against any attempt to infiltrate Serb units. Second, the remaining Serb civilians, as well as their religious and historical sites, will need protection from Albanians seeking vengeance. Many weapons have already been distributed to Serb civilians. Having been used to harass the Albanians, these weapons will come to be seen as a vital form of self-defence.

This is one of the reasons why Kosovo will have to become in effect a Nato protectorate, whatever its constitutional position as notionally part of Serbia or on the road to independence. The alliance will have responsibility for law and order, guarding the borders and overseeing the reconstruction of the country's infrastructure and the regeneration of its economy.

The new requirements may lead to changes in the composition of the protection force but they do not argue for big revisions to the proposed numbers. The basic problem for Nato planners is that existing plans all assume the force enters with Serb consent. It was Mr Milosevic's refusal to countenance the entry of Nato forces that led to the breakdown of the Rambouillet talks and remains the central issue of contention.

Before he accedes to this demand under duress, Mr Milosevic will almost certainly first offer partition. As this would probably be accompanied by a movement of Serbs out of the rump Kosovo, this would ease the requirements of a protection force. For the moment such an offer would undoubtedly be refused.

Washington: Americans are digging in for a long war which they expect to last months or even years and result in the deaths of their own soldiers (Damian Whitworth writes). Despite President Clinton's pronouncements, they believe ground troops will be sent in to try and complete the job in Kosovo and they are roughly equally divided on whether this is the right thing to do. Mr Clinton will be studying most carefully data that shows a widespread belief that Nato is unlikely to achieve its aims swiftly and by air warfare alone.

'Corridor' for US soldiers

Continued from page 1
ple for brutal nationalist purposes," the EU foreign minister said in a statement.

However, in Brussels there were firm denials that Nato bombers had been responsible for the huge damage to civilian buildings in Pristina.

Western defence sources said that although Nato bombers had hit targets in Pristina, the attacks had been in other parts of the town and they insisted that the type of damage being shown on television would not have been the result of bombs from the air.

Intelligence sources said last week that there was evidence of Yugoslav troops placing trucks with explosives in a number of towns, to cause damage which could then be blamed on Nato bombers.

Responding to Belgrade's claim that the oppression in Kosovo had now stopped, Senator Solana said: "The information that I have at the moment very clearly indicates that military operations are continuing on the Serbian side in a dramatic way."

RAF Harriers were involved in back-to-back bombing raids

over Kosovo in the hunt for Yugoslav forces in the province. After one wave had returned from a morning raid, dropping anti-personnel cluster bombs on mobile Yugoslav units, a second wave took off for a similar mission. There were also further raids on Belgrade. More than 400 Nato missions were flown in 24 hours, the alliance said.

As a boost to Nato's plan to expand its firepower in the region, the Albanian parliament yesterday approved the deployment of 24 American Apache attack helicopters to Albania.



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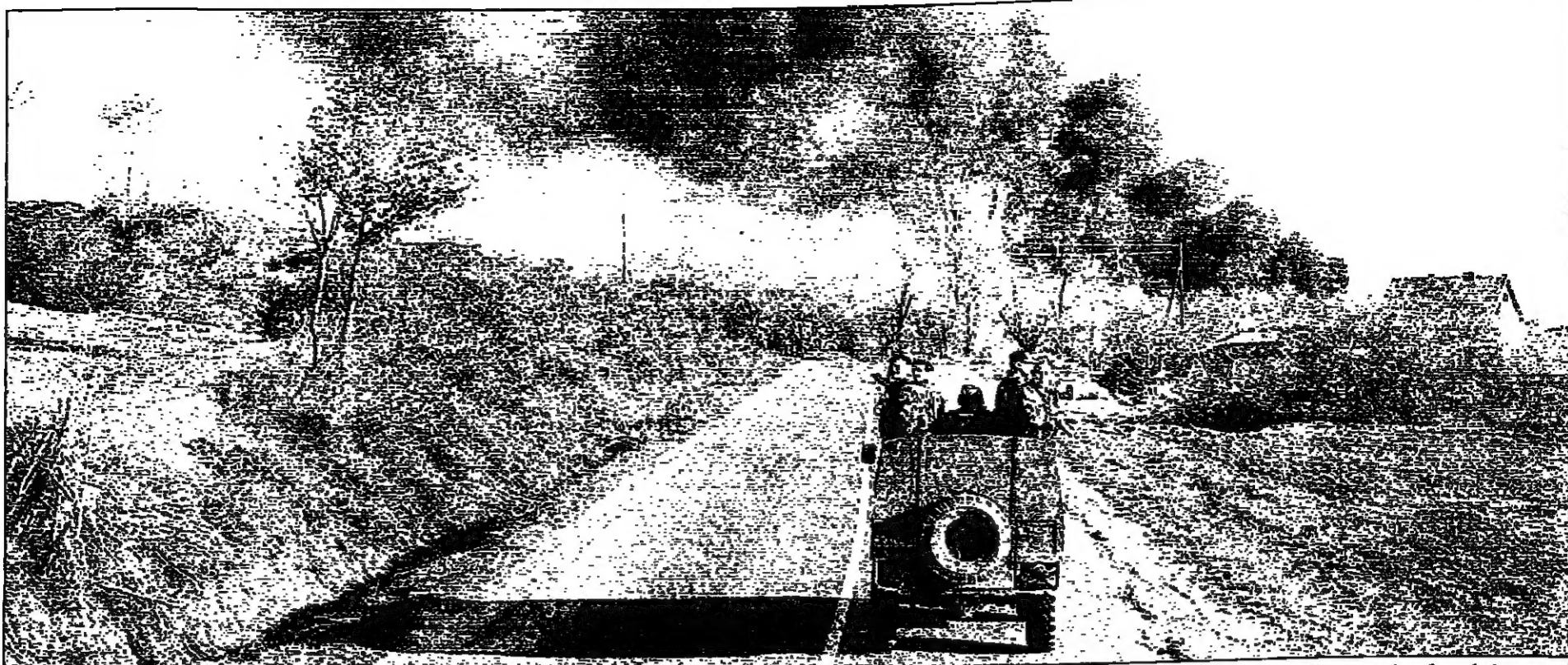
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BALKANS WAR: THE ALLIANCE

Nervous allies get appetite for war



Europe has found the stomach for a fight by marching to an American drum, writes Charles Bremner in Brussels



Serb troops on patrol on the outskirts of Pristina yesterday after a Nato airstrike. Concern about lack of resolve among allied countries has largely proved unfounded

IF NATO blundered by counting on a swift collapse by President Milosevic after a bout of bombing, the alliance can take heart from another misjudgment. This was the assumption that continental Europe had little stomach for a fight

and the shakier governments would soon wobble under the pressure of public disapproval and pacifist politicians.

A disaster in the Balkans could still bring that about. Italy showed renewed signs of wavering yesterday with a sug-

gestion that the bombing should stop soon. But for the moment, there is general relief over the resolve among allied states as the barbarity in Kosovo has rallied a revolted public behind the Nato offensive.

A decade ago, after the collapse of communism, it would have been unthinkable to imagine Paris, Bonn and Rome marching into battle on European soil under American command. Polls now show growing support for a ground campaign.

To the horror of diehard anti-imperialists in France, Germany and elsewhere, Nato's "just war", as *Le Monde* called it, has achieved a secondary result of reasserting American power in the old world and exposing the feebleness of the Eu-

ropean Union as it tries to manage its own security and extend eastwards.

As the European media have turned the campaign into good guy Washington versus bad guy Belgrade, it is clear that even an incomplete and

messy success for Nato will galvanise the EU into speeding British-backed plans for a homegrown defence under Nato auspices. It should also jolt the EU into toning down the internal obsessions that have sapped its desire for eastward expansion.

Old reflexes are still operating. Anti-American feeling is visible from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean and it is being fuelled by signs of supposed Yankee arrogance.

Many did not like the way President Clinton dismissed the Belgrade peace offer apparently before consulting his Nato partners.

In Germany, Chancellor Schröder faces dissent from some of his Social Democrats, while in Italy Massimo D'Alema, the Prime Minister, is under pressure from his Communist coalition partners. Greek qualms are a special case, given the country's Balkan entanglement.

But the biggest example of a Kosovo-inspired upheaval is in France, where the Gaullist President Chirac and Lionel Jospin, the Socialist Prime Minister, have thrown their weight behind Nato, sowing dismay among hardline Gaullists and old leftists alike.

M. Jospin's Green coalition partners are demanding a Nato ground offensive while the Communists, also, in Government, have succumbed to old pro-Soviet instincts and are marching alongside pro-Milosevic Serbs.

Traditionalist French thinkers claim the whole Balkan war is a naked American plot, supported by British poodles, for the control of Europe. However most have fallen in behind the view — not heard in Paris since the wartime Liberation — that America has come as a necessary, although unwelcome, saviour for an impotent Europe.

Laying down new dogma yesterday, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, bible of the leftwing int-

elligentsia, thundered: "Denouncing American imperialism... shows an intellectual vacuum, the abandonment of all international ambition for France and for Europe."

Against this background, governments are trying to extract lessons and carve out a role for an EU that has been sorely eclipsed. The biggest symbol of the pecking order came ten days ago when the European Commission dutifully turned up at Nato headquarters in Brussels for a crisis session on the conflict. French feathers were ruffled by this first official collaboration between the two organisations.

The EU, which includes four non-Nato states, is trying to assert itself through human-

'Nato's just war has achieved a secondary result of reasserting American power in the old world'

itarian relief and with diplomatic and financial efforts to shore up the region. The Commission, enfeebled by its caretaker status, is busy with a plan to reward Macedonia with promises of jumping the queue for EU membership.

Beyond the immediate conflict, Europe is drawing one conclusion: the EU's new machinery for running a centralised EU foreign policy — due for launch this summer — will come to nothing without a full-scale military structure and the will to use it. A Nato success in Kosovo will be a big boost to Tony Blair's plan to ensure the closest of links between the American-led alliance and the EU's semi-autonomous EU defence arm.

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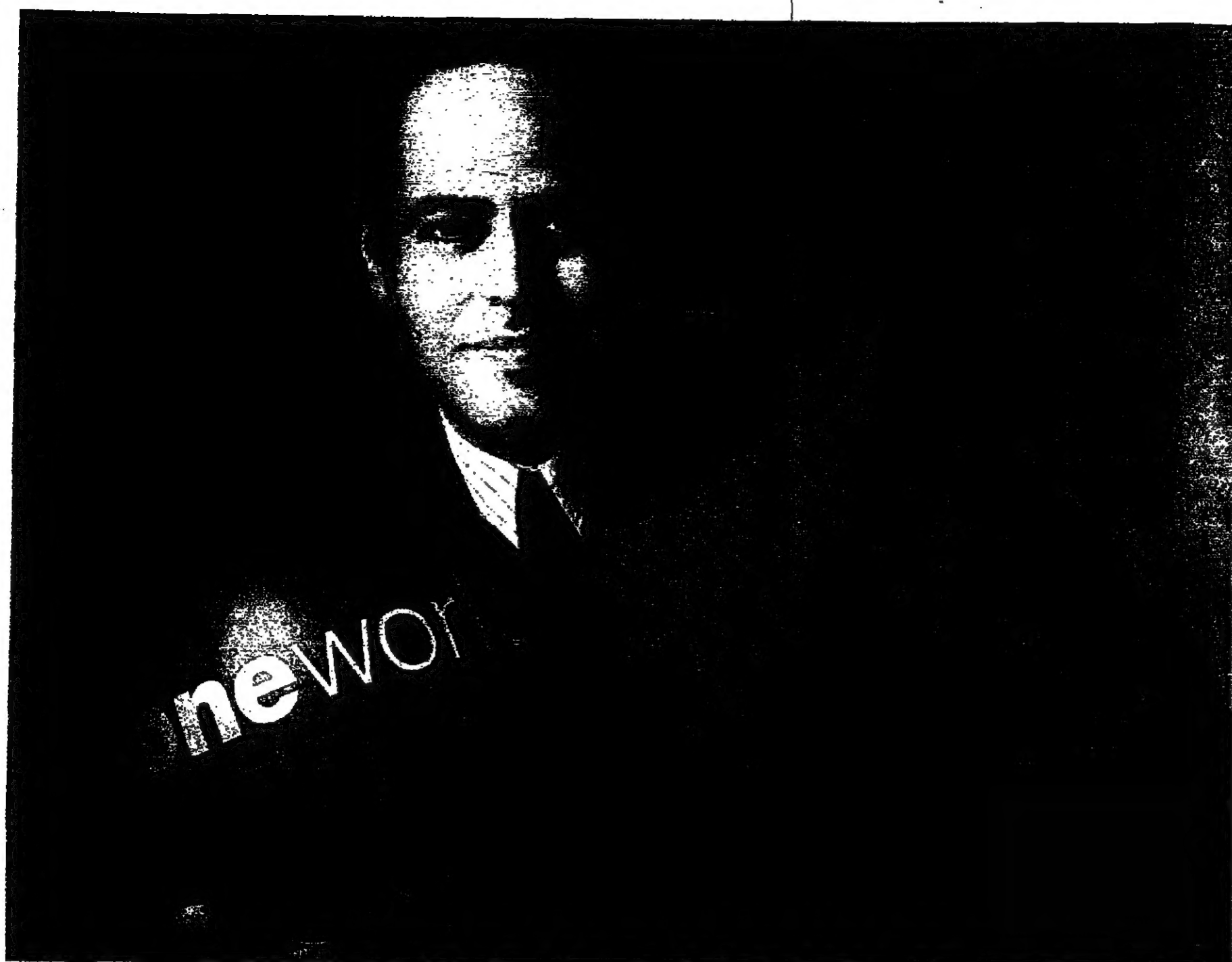
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BALKANS WAR: RELIEF OPERATION

British troops give sanctuary to destitute

TO PREVENT any more of Kosovo's refugees being forcibly driven out of Macedonia, British troops have offered to give sanctuary to anyone who wants it at its hastily built camp.

Senior officers asked Macedonian ministers if those families separated and stranded around the country could be brought together at the tented refuge built on a grass airstrip at Brazda. Brigadier Tim Cross, running this Nato relief operation, said: "We will find room for them all somehow so there is time for the UN and everyone else to plan their futures properly."

In just two days about 28,000 refugees have poured into this still unfinished camp and they are still coming.

Yesterday, he located a makeshift camp of a thousand refugees near Kumanovo that no one knew existed. Its discovery involved him in more painful and protracted negotiations to get those forgotten families into his care.

Macedonian officials have yet to respond to the British offer of a haven. Their inclination remains to push the Kosovo Albanians beyond its own

Daniel McGrory at Brazda sees soldiers struggle to rescue the sick and the dying

borders rather than ensure their comfort and safety.

While the Western alliance remains the main provider for the refugees, its commanders realise they are going to have to hand over the running of its humanitarian camps to the United Nations and local officials while they ready themselves for orders to move across the border into Kosovo to enforce any peace deal. It is understood that Nato has given a ten-day deadline for aid agencies to replace them but the dilemma is that without the Nato military role this aid operation would collapse.

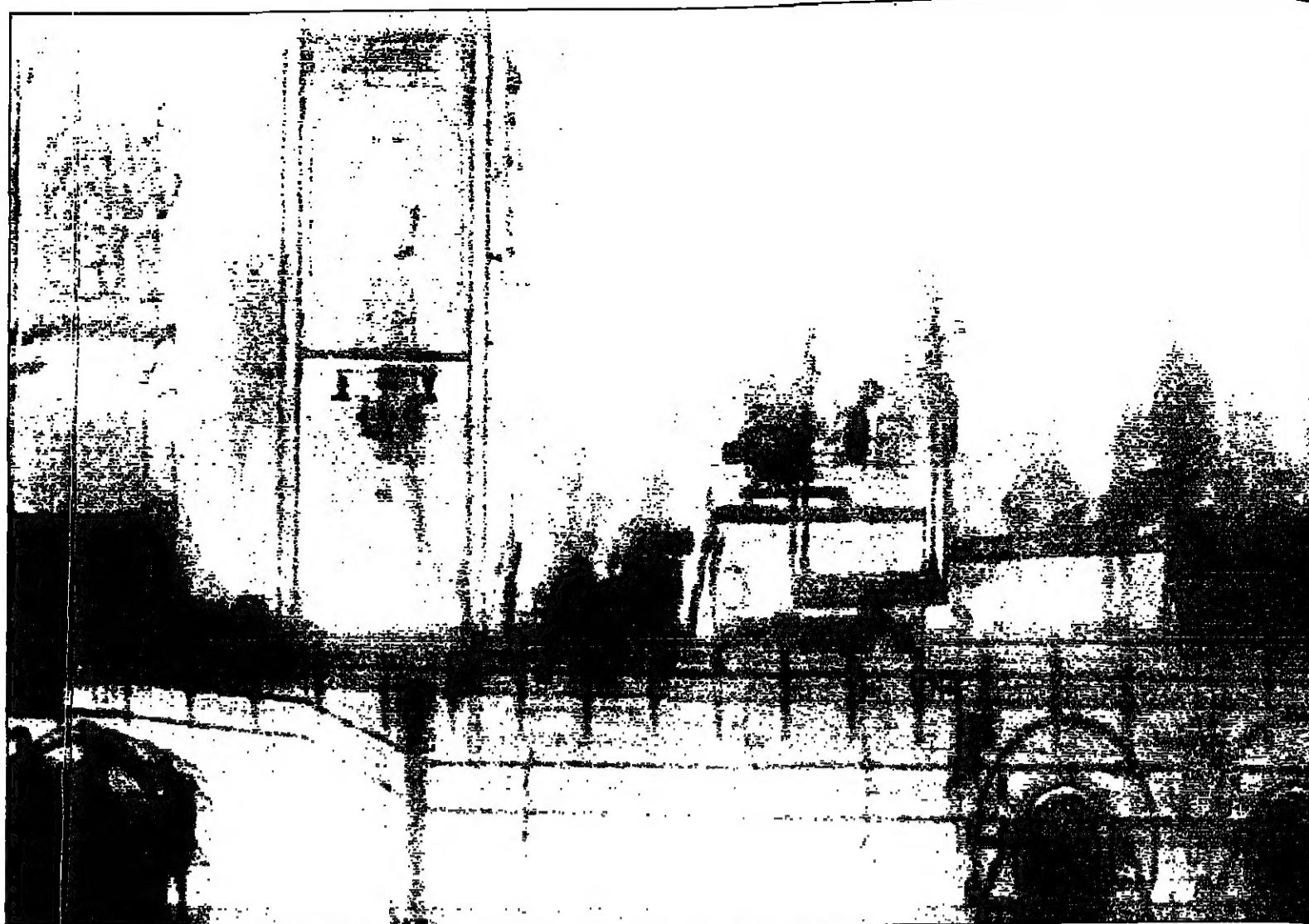
Frightened families dread the prospect of Macedonian riot police taking control of this camp but British troops are reluctant to stay on "an open-ended basis". One senior

British officer said last night: "We can't be responsible for running a refugee camp maybe for years but we clearly won't walk away."

The most delicate issue is the protection of Brazda. Macedonian police burst inside the compound yesterday saying they were looking for "terrorist suspects" linked to the Kosovo Liberation Army who they claimed were posing as refugees. Robust persuasion saw the police leave to the evident relief of watching refugees. But a senior Nato officer noted: "The Skopje Government has said their police won't come inside our perimeters, but the truth is there is not much we can do to stop them."

Rows of tents dot the airfield and a nearby hillside. The newer, exhausted arrivals spread blankets on any patch of grass they can find as soldiers run between them offering food, extra tents and blankets.

The sudden human deluge on Brazda was seen as a deliberate retaliation by Macedonian officials after Brigadier Cross and Clare Short, the Secretary of State for International



An X-ray image reveals Kosovo Albanian stowaways inside a lorry bound for England yesterday. The X-ray was taken by French Customs at the Channel Tunnel freight terminal at Calais. About 40 ethnic Albanian refugees besiege the terminal daily to seek a way to cross the Channel

Development, protested earlier this week over their obstructing the refugees' escape. For some this sanctuary came too late. Major Jeremy Rowan stood outside the field hospital he had set up on the

edge of the camp and which was staffed by doctors from half a dozen nations. "Some newborn infants, and some of the very old were beyond any medical help by the time they reached us. If we could have

got to them a few hours before it would have been a different story." The major transferred some of the most chronically sick in British Army ambulances to hospitals in Skopje but they were turned away.

"We have seen patients here who were thrown out of hospitals in Pristina without their post-operative wounds being properly dressed. There are many elderly people with chronic illnesses like heart ail-

ments, diabetes and they do not have their medicines." John Dailly, the army chaplain, observed: "What is so remarkable after all their suffering is the quiet dignity these people exhibit."

Bombs start to take toll on Serb morale

THE moustachioed driver crossed himself in the Orthodox fashion and braced his arms on the steering wheel. Into the Valley of Death, we thought, our prayers joining his in the hope that the old jolopy would hold together in this, our hour of need. The steely-grey waters of the Danube sped by below as our nails dug into seat cushions and we held our collective breath.

Catching the 95 bus to Pančevo was a hazardous venture at the best of times, given the state of Belgrade's public transport system. But these days charging the mile of rickety ironwork that links the northern suburb to the capital has an extra frisson for commuters: the ancient bridge might be hit by a cruise missile.

Once home from their nightly run of Nato's gauntlet, their main concern is getting back the next morning. "When I hear the explosions, I roll out of bed and check if the bridge is still there. Then I go back to sleep," said my taxi driver, Nenad. But he also spoke of the anger that wells up within him at every detonation. "As my house is shaking, it's difficult to tell you how I feel—but let them come to us on the ground, and then they'll have their deaths, too."

As the bombs fall, Belgrade transforms from the reasonably civilised place it is by day to a shadowy world of security forces and night-time prowlers in smoked-glass BMWs and Audis. It is a place where English can no longer be spoken, and quiet observation is made from the dimmest recesses. Groups of flat-jewellers huddle on pavements beneath the stars, and blue police lights wink on distant intersections.

There is anger. But there is fear, too. "I fought in Slovenia and Croatia, but I cannot understand this. Where will the bread come from for me to feed my wife and child?" asked Goran, driving one of the few taxis patrolling this neither world of laser-guided death. "I



Tom Walker looks beyond the anger and fear on the streets of Belgrade and sees cracks appear in national solidarity

have no choice but to stay out and work."

But the bread does come, and the fruit and vegetables: the markets are full of them, and many of us wait for the strawberries of late spring. There are still traffic jams and many people travel one to a car, despite street rumours that fuel racketers risk being shot on the spot and that diesel has run out in southern Serbia. Mobile phones beep and students flock to Internet

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Non-government monetary assistance directed to the people of Kosovo, as of last night. The figures were supplied by major aid agencies. They may vary, according to the number of separate appeals in each country

cafés, though not to surf for news. In the sun, the terraces bustle with life and the Balkan love affair with Turkish coffee and a cigarette is unbroken. At a superficial glance, war with Nato is a phoney business.

But look deeper and cracks are appearing in the rotten basement of Serbian society, where seven years of sanctions and reliance on a gangster-led grey economy are taking their toll. Grafar stretching across the wrecked interiors of the

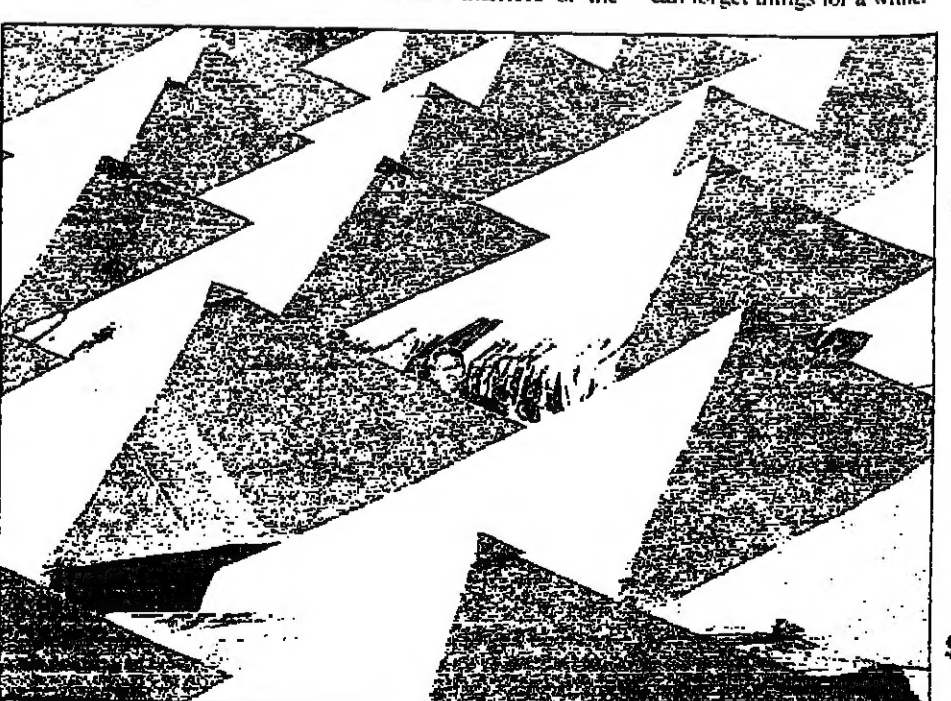
US and French cultural centres is coarse but funny; but the appearance of hardcore pornography films on midday television is disturbing.

Serbia is taking a battering, morally and physically. The airstrikes are leaving it in need of a Marshall-style reconstruction plan. Should Nato target bridges across Belgrade's Sava and Danube rivers, the country will lie in a series of disjointed and moribund parts. There had been few functioning factories, and the bombardment of chemical and white-goods plants has put thousands more out of work. With production dipping towards zero, salaries go unpaid and people rely on the small farms from which nearly all came.

The effect of airstrikes on the media is hardly encouraging either, with independent voices and opinions virtually snuffed out. Few Serbs have access to satellite television, and those that do dismiss much Nato-speak as lies. On the radio, the BBC World Service is similarly ignored.

In the heat of yesterday afternoon, it was difficult to believe anything was amiss in the leafy suburbs near President Milosevic's residence. Horses are trained in the hippodrome in the valley below, the sense of tranquillity broken only by a helicopter flying low towards the military hospital.

As Nenad waited to hear if his girlfriend Mira was safely across the Pančevo bridge, he tuned the car radio to his favourite station, Nostalgia 90.2 FM. "I like it because there's no news and they play music from the old Yugoslavia," he said. "It's good stuff and you can forget things for a while."



A Kosovan walks along a row of tents at the Brazda camp where Macedonian police bussed thousands of refugees from the border no man's land during the night

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THE BALKANS: THE REFUGEES

Troops mine frontier to cut off escape

SERB soldiers dug trenches and laid more mines along Kosovo's border with Albania yesterday to prevent any escape by the hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians who have been forced back from refugee convoys.

The Serbs, who pointed sniper rifles at anyone straying too near the Morine frontier, toiled at their task yesterday to keep what Nato fears are huge numbers of hostages inside Kosovo, having spent the previous week robbing, raping, and expelling them.

Nevertheless, one man escaped. Rahim Zulfaz who at 83 is too old to serve in the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army and was therefore spared death, staggered across the border in his socks. He had been walking for three days from a village close to Prizren, about 15 miles from the Morine crossing, after he got off his family's tractor to relieve himself, and was cut off as the Serbs forced the exodus of more than 260,000 people into Albania.

"My eyesight is now very bad. I could not find anyone and wandered about for a while. Then I found the road and just started walking. I had left my shoes in the trailer so I was just in socks," the retired farmer said.

He said he thought his family had reached Albania. He was resting from his ordeal in



At the Morine crossing point, Sam Kiley watches the Serbs try to keep in the inhabitants they had begun to drive out

an Italian Army hospital set up for refugees but his family had still not been traced yesterday. Medical staff did not have the heart to tell him that they feared his relatives might be among the estimated 80,000 people driven back from the 15-mile queue that had been trying to cross into Albania at Morine.

Clare Short, the Secretary of State for International Development, said yesterday she feared for the lives of the remaining Kosovo Albanians. "They [the Serbs] seem now to have started rounding up refugees queuing to leave Kosovo and returning them by force. We do not know whether they have been driven back to their homes or elsewhere within Kosovo. It is not known where the refugees are and what is happening to them."

But their fate is obvious to refugees who have fled Kosovo. Milo Goranyi, who arrived at Morine four days ago before the border was closed, claimed: "They are being held in concentration camps as hostages and human shields. Milosevic needs them to defend against the attacks on his ground troops."

Mr Zulfaz described an eerie walk past thousands of vehicles that had been abandoned. He spent two nights sleeping in cars that he said had been left "in a hurry" with plenty of blankets inside.

Some of the vehicles, such as tractors and buses, had been destroyed by Serbs who were ordered to end the expulsion of Kosovo's Albanians. The Serbian leader's policy is clearly now to hold captive the remaining Kosovo Albanians since they represent his best defence against tank-busting A10 aircraft and helicopter gunships.

Mr Zulfaz said: "When I got to the border the guards said I should not leave because the

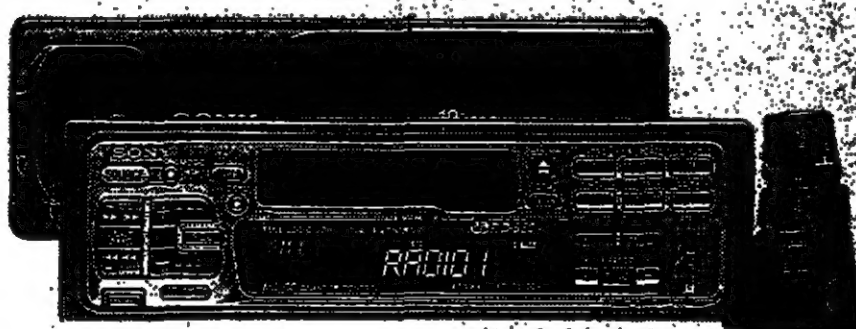
shooting had stopped in Kosovo. They said I should go home. I did not tell them that would be a waste of time because they had burnt it down. I just said I wanted to see my family who were in Albania. They gave me a glass of water and wished me luck."

Yesterday Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said she was "very, very worried" after a visit to a refugee camp at Kukes in northern Albania.

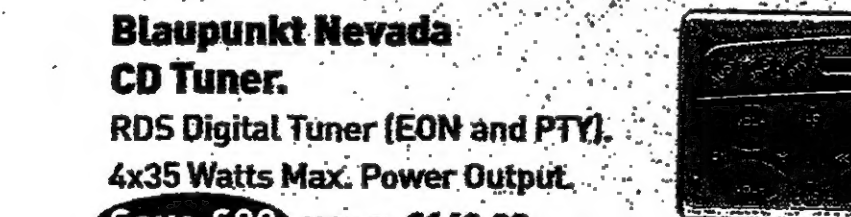


Kosovo refugees reach out to receive bread yesterday at a temporary holding camp in an old factory on the outskirts of Kukes in Albania. The exodus of refugees has stopped since the Serb authorities sealed the borders, prompting fears that they may be used as human shields.

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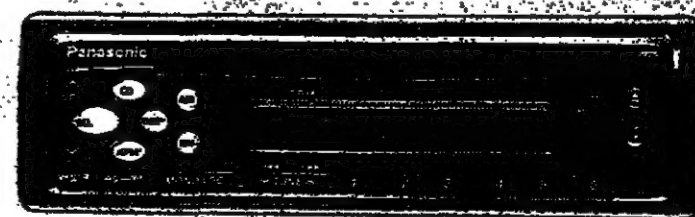
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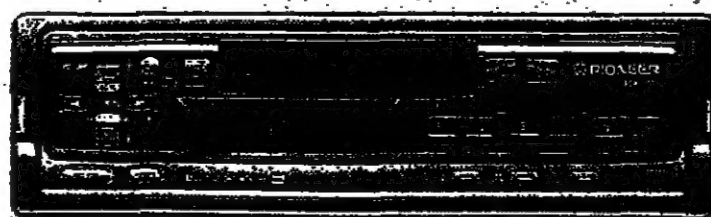
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Plight of missing thousands worries refugee agencies

FROM DANIEL MCGRORY IN SKOPJE

AID agencies were still trying to discover last night what had become of thousands of refugees forcibly evicted from Macedonia's borders.

While the UN searched for 10,000 they say are unaccounted for, Nato is concerned about up to 60,000 refugees forced back into Kosovo by the Serbs in the past 48 hours. Javier Solana, the Nato Secretary-General, is among many who fear these families may be used as human shields.

Most of Kosovo's borders remained sealed yesterday. Nato admitted that those repatriated were "beyond our reach". If thousands are trapped in Kosovo at gunpoint it will reinvigorate the argument for ground troops to be sent from Macedonia and Albania.

Serb border troops could be seen laying new minefields yesterday just beyond the frontier, beside some of the cars abandoned by families who were made to retrace their tracks to homes they fear have been burnt or seized.

In Macedonia a grotesque game of hide-and-seek was being played last night as the Skopje Government and aid agencies squabbled over the numbers bussed away in darkness from the squalid transit camp at Blace. The Red Cross and the UNHCR believe that between 27,000 and 30,000 had been held there.

The Skopje authorities claim there were 15,000 at most. About 7,000, they say, are in Albania, camping in a sports stadium. About the same number, they claim, are still inside Macedonia, including 2,000 sent to the Brazda refugee run by British troops.

Nato commanders there say they only received three busloads on the night of the Blace deportation.

A senior UNHCR official said: "Anyone who witnessed the scene at Blace can see there were up 30,000 on that

riverbank. We want to know where all these people are."

As neither the UN nor Nato was allowed to register those trapped at the frontier, there is no way of knowing for sure. A UNHCR spokesman said:

"We have still not received a single name of any of those expelled from Blace. What we know from those who are accounted for is that their families were separated."

UNHCR officials in Greece said last night that a convoy of buses carrying 2,000 refugees arrived at the southern border of Macedonia and was turned away. They believe the buses were diverted to Albania.

They fear those unaccounted for may be being kept at makeshift camps closer to the Albanian border where the Macedonians want all the refugees to go.

Macedonian officials say they made it clear that they could accept no more refugees. Thomir Ilevski, of the Foreign Ministry, said: "A third of the Bosnian refugees we took in have never gone home. We are not a rich country and this many ethnic Albanians would cause unrest."

He also criticised Nato's part in the exodus, saying "these airstrikes provoked some of these people to flee Kosovo. We took them away at night because the roads were quieter so we could make their journey easier."

Last night Nato was using its surveillance planes to monitor the drift of refugees back to Kosovo. Monitors from the OSCE who have spoken to some of their local staff trapped inside Kosovo report that they were turned back from the borders by the Serbs who said as the operation against the KLA had ended it was safe for them to go home.

"Can you imagine anyone who stood on a road for eight days trusting someone who forced them out of their homes?" a spokesman said.

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Pregnant women told wine is worse than cigarettes

WOMEN who drink a glass of wine each day during their pregnancy could be doing more harm to their babies than if they smoke, according to research published in Belfast yesterday.

The study suggests that a woman who drinks between five and seven units of alcohol a week risks damaging the central nervous system of her child.

The research, carried out by the Foetal Behavioural Centre at the Royal Maternity Hospital in Belfast, found that a baby's brain stem was more adversely affected by alcohol than cigarettes. The findings will come as a shock to many women, who have been repeatedly warned of cigarettes during pregnancy but told that an occasional glass of wine would not do their foetus any harm.

Jenny Little, a researcher at the centre, said that her findings undermined the traditional medical wisdom that a little alcohol would not harm a developing baby.

She tested the startle reaction, or sudden movement of the arms, in 129 unborn babies aged 25 weeks. She found that the foetuses of many women who drank did not react to the

New research challenges medical wisdom about dangers to babies, reports Audrey Magee

buzzer stimulus placed on the mother's stomach. Most babies of women who did not drink reacted within the required 4.5 seconds.

She tested women in four categories: women who drank and smoked, women who smoked but did not drink, women who drank but did not smoke, and a control group of women who neither drank nor smoked. In the control group, 70 per cent of babies had developed the startle reaction by 25 weeks and reacted to the stimulus. Mrs Little said that it was perfectly normal that the remaining 30 per cent of foetuses would develop the startle reaction at a later date.

But only 42.1 per cent of babies of women who drank reacted, compared with 55 per cent of the foetuses of women

who smoked. The unborn children of women who smoked and drank fared worst, with only 37.5 per cent of unborn babies reacting to the buzzing sound. Mrs Little said: "I think more information is needed and more health promotion campaigns against drinking alcohol during pregnancy."

She said that she was uncertain of the long-term effects of alcohol on the children after birth as they scored normally in all tests carried out on newborn babies. She added that it was possible, however, that a baby showing no startle reaction in the womb at 25 weeks could suffer cognitive and behavioural difficulties when it was older.

"We need more research carried out on this. In the United States women are told not to drink any alcohol during pregnancy."

The Foetal Behavioural Centre, which is linked to the psychology department of Queen's University in Belfast, has also examined the foetal movements of unborn babies suffering spina bifida. The research carried out shows that some kinds of spina bifida lesions would benefit from being operated on while the baby is still in the womb.



Milk and honey: Rachel Rowlands has turned a kitchen hobby into a multimillion-pound organic dairy business

Yoghurt pots a fortune for organic farm

By VALERIE ELLIOTT

AN ORGANIC farmer who used up spare milk to make yoghurt and cream has turned her kitchen hobby into a multimillion-pound organic dairy business.

Rachel Rowlands is now hoping to do for organic yoghurt what Laura Ashley did for flowerprinted cotton. But the success of Rachel's Dairy is all because of a freak of nature. A snowstorm in 1982 prevented tankers from collecting Guernsey milk from her 250-acre Brynllys farm at Borth, near Aberystwyth.

Mrs Rowlands refused to pour her milk down the drain. Instead, she hunted out her grandmother's old butter churn and separator and set to work.

"It took ten days for the tankers to get to us so I made the yoghurts and cream and gave the skimmed milk to the cows. I approached some local shops and hotels with the produce and they all wanted more."

From a few dozen pots a week in 1982, which brought in some £5,000 a year, Mrs Rowlands is now producing 25,000 pots a day with a £3 million annual turnover.

Yesterday, a multimillion-pound deal with Horizon, America's main organic dairy producer, put Rachel's Dairy on track to expand with more organic dairy processing plants near organic farms around the country.

They hope to expand into new markets throughout Europe and Mrs Rowlands hopes that her business will persuade more farmers to return to organic techniques.

"We want to help to bring more jobs to the countryside and for farmers to convert to organic techniques," she said.

"There is still a lot of reluctance to do so, though. They think if everyone does it there won't be a market. But we are only using 3.5 million litres of milk a year. We want that to go to five million in a year and 20 million in the years ahead."

The farm, first owned by her grandmother and then by her mother, Dinah Williams, now 88, has been a leading exponent of organic farming. Mrs Williams was convinced that she should stick to traditional farming techniques after a chance meeting with Lady Eve Balfour, a founder member of the Soil Association, in 1948.

Mrs Rowlands, 52, and her husband, Gareth, 54, continued the trend and realised that people were concerned about the origins of their food and how it was produced. They opened up their farm and allowed people to see what they did and how the animals were treated.

The couple refused to say how much they had made on the deal. Mrs Rowlands said, however, that they and their three children had gained security: "We will feel comfortable and relaxed. Don't listen to anyone who says hard work does not pay. We took many risks over the years and we put our farm as collateral to get the factory."

The couple will be consultants to the firm. Mrs Rowlands has a seat on the board and her son John, 32, will be operations manager of the company in Britain — so far a factory in Aberystwyth with a staff of 48, but they hope to double the business within five years.

Other processing plants are also planned, possibly in Cornwall and Lancashire.

When the bride wore red

By PHILIP HOWARD

IN Ancient Greece, a bride wore a veil that marked her out as an object of importance. Her modern sister 25 centuries later wears one for the same purpose.

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, of the University of Wales, yesterday gave a paper to the Classical Association, meeting in Liverpool, on the wedding customs his research has uncovered. The few ancient texts that speak of the wedding veil call its colour "krokos". This is usually translated as yellow, like the bulb we call a crocus. But ancient colour-words are problematic.

Mr Llewellyn-Jones thinks that the Greek veil was not yellow, but red. He argues that it was a metaphor for the hymen. In

most "veil societies" red veils are still worn at marriage rituals. There may be a connection between the colour and the blood of the bride supposed to be released at first intercourse.

In some modern weddings the bride is unveiled at the end of the ceremony with the exhortation to the groom, "you may now kiss the bride". The bride was also unveiled at an Ancient Greek wedding. But Mr Llewellyn-Jones believes that her unveiling was a rite of debasement.

The unveiling happened at the home of the bride, before she was led off, veiled again, to the groom's house in the ancient equivalent of a stretch limo festooned with white ribbons.

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Prince visits old man of the islands



Donald McKillop with the Prince on TV and, below, with wife Gloria: he has turned down lucrative deals



The Prince of Wales among young shinty players yesterday on Berneray, where he had returned to open a £6 million causeway

Gillian Harris and Alan Hamilton on a reunion in the Hebrides

THE Prince of Wales took time off from official duties in the Outer Hebrides yesterday to visit the old friend who taught him about crofting. Donald McKillop was his host for a private visit 12 years ago when he retreated to the island of Berneray to try the simple farming life.

The Prince has the title Lord of the Isles. Mr McKillop has the nickname Splash, which he says derives from a childhood habit of walking in puddles, although other islanders insist it refers to the amount of water he puts in a glass of whisky. Their latest reunion came as the Prince travelled to Berneray to open a £6.6 million causeway linking the tiny island to North Uist.

The Prince first knew of Berneray from the Royal Family's traditional Western Isles summer cruise in the

Royal Yacht Britannia. Shortly after his marriage, he landed on the island from the yacht with the Princess of Wales. By 1987 his marriage was in virtual ruins and he was spending more and more time alone in Scotland. He asked to experience the crofting life, both as a farmer himself at Highbrook and a king in waiting anxious to meet his ordinary future subjects. Mr McKillop was chosen as a typical crofter, growing arable crops and potatoes and rearing sheep.

The Prince was a guest for five days, living in the cottage with the crofter and his Australian wife Gloria, a retired nurse. During his visit the Prince helped to build a drystone

wall, planted potatoes, dipped sheep and fished for prawn and lobster in a creel boat, hauling in the lines like an experienced deckhand. He also attended a local funeral and tried cutting peat on neighbouring North Uist. According to friends, he fell in love with the crofting lifestyle and went home with his developing interest in organic farming firmly reinforced.

So discreet are the islanders that the Prince's 1987 visit to Berneray remained a secret until it was over. He returned to the island in 1991 to make a television documentary with the presenter Selina Scott, but since then had not been back until yesterday. After the programme, *A Prince*

Among Islands, was shown, Mr McKillop was inundated with requests from restaurants wanting to buy potatoes, known locally as Prince Charles, from the "Prince's croft" but, despite the lucrative deals on offer, the crofter refused.

Mr McKillop, now 67, still runs his croft, although he has given up arable crops and it is a long time since he went out in his own fishing boat. Since his wife Gloria retired from the health service, they have run a bed and breakfast business from their home.

The Prince arrived more than an hour late yesterday due to high winds. He recalled drinking a concoction of whisky and liqueur when

he was last on the island. "I discovered what a 'rusty nail' is, and I am not sure that it did anything for my brain. However I am hoping for another one later," he said. He met most of the island's 130 population in the community hall, and later had a private meeting with the McKillops.

The Prince was already well-informed on farming before his 1987 stay. During the 1970s he had absorbed the ideas of sustainable agriculture promoted in Fritz Schumacher's book *Small Is Beautiful*. When he began to take a hands-on approach to running the Duchy of Cornwall, he was persuaded of the merits of organic farming by its

then secretary, Sir John Higgs. He began an intensive programme of visiting Duchy tenant farmers, which included spending a full week on a Dartmoor hill farm, which produced a memorable picture of him milking a cow.

The island celebrated the Prince's visit with a shinty festival and an informal buffet in the church hall. Before officially opening the half-mile long causeway, which replaces a ten-minute ferry crossing, the Prince visited Chearsabhaig Arts Centre in Lochmaddy, North Uist, and the town's refurbished medical centre.

The Prince had also been hoping to declare the causeway open in Gaelic, but that had to be abandoned, because there was no time to rehearse with any of the Gaelic-speaking islanders.

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تحتفظ بالصور

● New inquiry into profits ● Concern at 'barrier' to competitors Are superstores cheating you?

BY ROBIN YOUNG

AN INQUIRY into charges of profiteering and anti-competitive practices by supermarkets has raised issues that merit further investigation, the Office of Fair Trading said yesterday.

John Bridgeman, Director-General of Fair Trading, said his office's nine-month inquiry into the £60 billion supermarket business had been "inconclusive". As a result, the Competition Commission, formerly the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, has been given at least another year to report to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on whether supermarkets enjoy too much monopoly power and make excessive profits.

The inquiry will encompass all companies in Britain with ten or more stores or with more than 600 sq metres of retail sales space.

The OFT examined the profits of the four largest supermarket chains — Tesco, Sainsbury, Safeway and Asda — over a five-year period from 1993 to 1998. The study took data from 1,630 stores and included an independent evaluation of land and buildings.

Mr Bridgeman said: "After analysing the profits of the four largest supermarket chains using a range of conventional and specialist economic measures, I have to conclude

HOW THE MARKET LEADERS CHECK OUT					
NO. OF STORES	TURNOVER 1998 (est. VAT)	OPERATING PROFIT 1998	OPERATING MARGIN 1998 (%)	MARKET CAPITALISATION	SHARE OF MARKET (From Verdict Research)
Asda 222	£7,619m	£414m	5.4	£4,493m	4.9%
J Sainsbury 381	£15,496m	£801m	5.2	£7,342m	9.6%
Safeway 468	£8,979m	£427m	6.1	£2,788m	6.8%
Somerfield 1,400	£6,056m	£187m	3.1	£1,571m	6.7%
Tesco 600	£16,175m	£882m	5.5	£10,751m	9.3%
Waitrose 90	£2,278m	£147m	6.5	£2,367m	1.2%
Carrefour (France) 937	£18,437m (estimate)	£700m (estimate)	3.8 (estimate)	£17,381m	
Metro (Germany) 474	£32,465m (estimate)	£515m (estimate)	1.6 (estimate)	£14,817m	

that there is a level of profitability here that requires further investigation by the Competition Commission."

Mr Bridgeman said the most important issue was the nature and extent of barriers to new competitors entering the sector. Other areas of concern included the impact of land prices on costs; the intensity of price competition at local, regional and national levels; and the nature of relationships between the supermarkets and their suppliers, including agricultural producers.

"I believe there are now significant barriers to new competitors in high-volume grocery retailing in Britain," Mr Bridgeman said. "Sites for

new stores are dwindling and this gives the existing stores an advantage. Planning delays, site development costs and the ability of the largest stores to outbid smaller rivals add to

'I have to conclude that there is a level of profitability here that requires further investigation'

the problem. This should not be seen as criticism of planning policy, it is simply to state the fact that there are significant barriers to entry and they limit the impact new competi-

tors could be expected to have on the behaviour of the current main players."

He was not satisfied that competition between existing retailers was effective. "I am

concerned that grocery prices are often set to match competitors rather than to undercut them, particularly in catchment areas where consumers have a limited choice of super-

markets. I have had concerns for some time that the supermarkets' power may become exploitative and the many responses from suppliers during our inquiry suggest that it is something which needs to be looked at."

The Consumers' Association welcomed the announcement. A spokesman said: "Consumer and competition issues in the supermarket sector are extremely complex and there is an urgent need for an informed public debate. There does appear to be evidence that the supermarkets have not been passing savings on to the consumer."

Spokesmen for the big supermarket chains said the deci-

sion came as no surprise. Safeway said: "We welcome the opportunity to clear the air and are confident that we will get a good result." David Reid, Tesco's deputy chairman, said: "The Competition Commission will find we champion the consumers' cause."

Janet Nunn, director of food and drink at the British Retail Consortium, which represents 90 per cent of retailers, said the referral would allow retailers to prove the sector was competitive and that customers were reaping the benefits.

A handful of food retailers control almost 50 per cent of the £87 billion-a-year food market, and some retail analysts allege that this has led to the formation of an anti-competitive cartel.

Critics claim that the main chains, including Tesco and Sainsbury, which produced pre-tax profits of more than £15 billion between them last year, charge more for goods in areas where they face less competition. Asda is the only major multiple retailer to operate a national price policy. The supermarkets say that the sector is fiercely competitive and that their profits are not out of line with international standards.

A previous OFT investigation of supermarkets in the early 1980s eventually concluded that the companies had no case to answer.

NEWS IN BRIEF

M25 murder trio win new appeal

Three men jailed for life for the murder of a motorist on the M25 and a series of robberies will have their cases referred back to the Court of Appeal, the Criminal Cases Review Commission said yesterday. One of the men's solicitors disclosed that a key witness at their trial was paid £10,000 by a national newspaper and £300 by the police.

Michael Davis, Randolph Johnson and Raphael Rowe, known as the M25 Three, were jailed at the Old Bailey for a series of attacks on one night in December 1988, including the murder of Peter Hurburgh. He was dragged from his car at gunpoint and beaten, which led to him suffering a fatal heart attack. The accused had an appeal against conviction dismissed by the Court of Appeal in 1993.

Breast doctor resigns

A doctor who was at the centre of a breast screening scandal has resigned after seeing an advance copy of an official report. John Brennan, a consultant radiologist, was in charge of breast screening at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, which failed to identify 24 cancer cases. Dr Brennan resigned within hours of reading the final report by a disciplinary panel into the case, in which nine patients died. In a statement he rejected criticism in the report of his clinical competence.

Wildfowling WW2 bomb empties pier

Hundreds of visitors were led to safety from Britain's longest seaside pier yesterday after fishermen dredged up an unexploded World War Two mine half a mile off the beach. Police ordered a full-scale evacuation of the crowded pier at Southend, Essex, when the unexploded mine was brought to the surface in the nets of a fishing boat. Seafront roads were closed to traffic while an army bomb disposal team was called in from Colchester garrison, 40 miles away.

Mobile phone review

Radiation watchdogs are to take a new look at the health effects of mobile phones. The inquiry was launched yesterday by Tessa Jowell, Minister for Public Health, after evidence from Bristol University that mobile phones may cause localised brain heating. Ms Jowell asked the National Radiological Protection Board to review all the research. "There has been no consistent evidence suggesting risk to health but there is continuing concern about the possibility," she said.

Not so super highway

Two thirds of Britons have never used the Internet or sent electronic mail, according to a survey by NOP. The West Country has the lowest Internet usage at fewer than one in four people. The greatest usage was in London, where three out of five have used it at some stage. Only 23 per cent of those questioned could define the Internet as a global computer network. The study showed that just under 50 per cent of men had used the Internet, against 34 per cent of women.

Loyalty comes at a price

BY ROBIN YOUNG

SOME surveys have claimed to show that basic food items can be up to 40 per cent more expensive in this country than in the rest of Europe or the United States, but like-for-like comparisons are notoriously difficult.

Other surveys have claimed to show that basic food items are cheaper in Britain than in France or Belgium. The supermarkets say that there cannot be much dissatisfaction with shops as consistently well-served as theirs.

Most recent figures give Tesco with 16 per cent of market share, Sainsbury 13 per cent, and Asda 6 per cent. Safeway has recently lost ground but Somerfield, the fifth-largest company, exceeded ex-

pectations at the beginning of this year by doubling its interim profits and showing a 3.4 per cent increase in like-for-like sales.

Discount chains have not had great success in Britain but they are a lively section of the market, credited with having some effect in reducing the big companies' profit margins.

Kwik-Save, which was the leader in the field, was forced to merge with Somerfield when faced with rapidly diminishing market share, and has been rebranded with higher-priced and better-quality stock.

The heaviest discounters are Aldi, Netto and Lidl, German and Danish companies with about 250 stores each and an estimated total market share of 3 per cent. In a recent survey, a fifth of shoppers said

they had used discount stores and rated them best on price.

Morrisons, the northern chain whose customers rate it well for price and quality, is seeking to expand. There are also convenience store operators trying to make inroads by opening 24 hours in the hope of attracting customers who are keener to avoid queues than to minimise bills.

Few consumers show loyalty to any particular supermarket. One in four shoppers told researchers that they would prefer to shop somewhere other than the store they used for their main food supplies.

Many have loyalty cards for more than one supermarket chain, and a fifth of shoppers said that price was the most important factor in choosing a supermarket.

Allergy sufferers urge more caution on food

BY CHRISTINE MIDDAP

JOHN PAGE thought that a cheese and cress sandwich could not possibly ignite his body's severe reaction to shellfish. But just as he was about to take a bite, the caution of the allergy sufferer overcame him and he checked inside the sandwich. He found three prawns — enough to cause a serious allergic reaction.

Stories of carelessness in some parts of the food industry were given by 28 teenagers with life-threatening allergies who met in London yesterday. Mr Page, 18, of Chingford, said: "You look at food that should be perfectly safe but you think that you can't eat it in case a prawn has got in there. There can be quite a lot of cross-contamination."

The results of food contamination or incorrect labelling can be fatal. In Britain last year a 19-year-old died after eating a takeaway curry that contained nuts, even though he had asked for a nut-free dish. A 36-year-old West Yorkshire woman died in 1987 after eating airline food that contained nuts.

Sometimes the allergy trigger is less easy to spot than a prawn. Teenagers yesterday said that food cooked in oil, such as chips, could also produce a reaction if other food containing nuts had already been cooked in the oil.

In people allergic to nuts, even body lotions and shampoos can cause a reaction because they can contain nut oil. David Reading, director of the Anaphylaxis [severe allergic reaction] Association, said: "Things have improved tremendously in the past few years and pre-packaged foods are pretty good in terms of labelling." But he said restaurants and takeaway foods could still cause problems. "If you eat in a restaurant you have to be pretty direct and ask questions... you have to say that if you eat nuts, for instance, it could kill you."

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Women jockeys fail punter in long run

After a decade, gambler looks set to lose chance of £128,000 from novelty bet, reports Paul Wilkinson

AN UNLIKELY bet made a decade ago seems doomed to fail at the starting line of the Grand National this weekend. Only a late run by a woman jockey can bring Ray Woodcock his long-prized £128,000 winnings.

For a total stake of £400, he bet that by the millennium Cliff Richard would receive a knighthood, a British heavyweight would win a world title and a woman would ride a National winner. The first two came through, bringing him £11,000. Lennox Lewis took the WBC heavyweight championship in 1992, and the Queen created Sir Cliff in her birthday honours four years ago.

Unfortunately for Mr Woodcock, women jockeys have let him down. Their best result in the National was in 1994 when Rosemary Henderson, a 51-year-old amateur, came fifth on her own horse, the 100-1 outsider Fiddlers Pike. Last night, when tomorrow's 32 riders were declared, there was not a woman in sight.

LINKS

www.britain.co.uk maps and travel information for the Merseyside course, news and a virtual reality Grand National ride
www.britain.co.uk/redrum.html
History and biography of America's most famous competitor, Red Rum

National was off three years before history books say

By Russell Jenkins, North West Correspondent

A UNIVERSITY librarian has upset historians of the Grand National with a claim that the famous steeplechase came under starter's orders three years earlier than is thought. John Pinfold also claims that Captain Becher should be remembered as the winning jockey of the first race as well as for taking cover under the brook that bears his name.

The honours board for the Aintree course records the first winner of the Grand National as Lottery on February 26, 1839. The race, then called the Grand Liverpool Steeplechase, is widely accepted as the first real National. It was preceded by two races at nearby Maghull.

However, Mr Pinfold, 46, librarian of Rhodes House, Oxford, begs to differ after spending six years on research at the British Library and the Picton Library in Liverpool. He claims in a book that the first Grand National took place three years earlier and that the two races at Maghull actually took place at Aintree.

According to the revised version, the first Grand National was run on February 29, 1836, and was won by The Duke, owned by Mr Sirde-

field, the landlord of the George pub in Crosby.

The winning jockey was Captain Becher, who went on to fame, if not fortune, three years later. Mr Pinfold, who says he used only original sources for his research, believes that Captain Becher should now be accorded his rightful place in the history books. He said: "I hope the authorities will amend the official record accordingly."

The author unveiled his book, *Gallant Sport: The Authentic History of Liverpool Races and the Grand National* (Portway Press, £26), at Aintree to a flutter of irritation from those authorities.

Reg Green, who wrote the accepted history, *A Race Apart*, is in no doubt that his rival's theories are wrong. "Don't you think if Captain Becher had won the first-ever Grand National his family would have mentioned it?" he said. "The facts are that there was a steeplechase at Aintree in 1836 won by The Duke, but no way could that be called a Grand National."

Nigel Payne, an Aintree official, said: "I have no problem with 1839. We have absolutely no reason to dispute it. The early races were simply not Grand Nationals."



Woodcock offered a £50,000 share of win

close on a novelty bet to winning this amount of money. This bet is uniquely diverse in the history of British off-course bookmaking.

Of the country's 214 licensed professional jump jockeys, only four are women and only one, Sophia Mitchell, has ridden the 15 winners on British courses necessary to qualify for the National. She said: "I would jump at the chance to ride in the National, but I don't think I will be holding

my breath waiting for an offer to come. I am riding at Hereford that afternoon and Wolverhampton in the evening, but if I did get an offer of a ride in the National I think I'd somehow get there. However, I don't think it is likely. Riders in the National will have ridden their mounts on a number of previous occasions and know them well. Barring a late injury, no one gets a National ride out of the blue."

Mitchell, 26, who lives near the racing stable centre of Lambourn in Berkshire, has ridden 39 winners, including one on the flat, since she turned professional four years ago. At 5ft 1in and only 7st 12oz, many trainers regard her as too light for an endurance event such as the 4½-mile Grand National. "Many trainers still believe we are not strong enough for riding over fences. I totally disagree. After all, women are among the best all over the world in other equestrian events like eventing and showjumping."

Racing, pages 46-47



The only chance: Sophia Mitchell, with former Flat champion Frankie Dettori

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INSIDE SECTION 2

The Media at war: Secret of the Kosovo tape, trapped on the boarder, life in Belgrade

Media Times, pages 38-41

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Blair forgets Scots have long memories

By Jason Allardice
SCOTTISH POLITICAL
REPORTER

IF THERE was anywhere less appropriate for a London-based politician such as the Prime Minister to pick a fight with Scottish nationalists, Ross MacKenzie could not think of it.

Few names in Scotland's bloody history evoke as much emotion as Culloden where, in 1746, the government's troops crushed Bonnie Prince Charlie's Jacobite rising. It sparked the clearance of thousands of Highlanders from their land and ended any prospect of Scotland becoming an independent country again.

That did not seem to worry Tony Blair and his entourage yesterday when they chose Culloden for his first Scottish parliament election visit.

Mr MacKenzie, who manages the Culloden visitor centre on the battlefield, was not afraid to admit that the PM's visit for a question and answers session in a local school had made his blood boil. "He would not be welcome here on the battlefield and I would hope he would respect that. My heart missed a beat when I heard," he said.

"The name Culloden still has resonance across Scotland and particularly in the Highlands and this is probably an unthinking example of London Millbank control. They just don't understand what it means to most Scots." A press

CULLODEN: A GAME OF ONE HALF

What was it? The last real battle fought on British soil, on April 16, 1746, between a well-drilled Hanoverian army under the Duke of Cumberland, partly second son of George III, and the ragged remains of the Highland forces under Prince Charles Edward Stuart, who was too drunk or too scared to lead his men into the conflict.

Where was it? On a desolate moor three miles east of Inverness, perfect flat ground for the disciplined army.

What was it all about? Bonnie Prince Charlie, heavily romanticised but in truth an effete aristocrat raised in Italy, dreamed of restoring the Stuart throne usurped by William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. He rallied the mainly Catholic Highlanders and marched them as far south as Derby where, like Scottish farmers presented with a goal opportunity, they lost their bottle and turned back.

Who won? Well, the Scots didn't. They were put to flight in 40 minutes; they didn't stay to play the second half. Culloden marked the end of the old feudal Highland clan system, and "Butcher" Cumberland followed up his victory with a ruthless bout of ethnic cleansing, ordering his men to kill Highlanders and burn their homes. Bagpipes, Scots dress and other symbols of nationhood were mercilessly suppressed. Over the following century clan lands were given over to southern sheep farmers, driving thousands of Highlanders to the New World.

So why is Charlie such a romantic figure? The Scots have long memories and a genius for celebrating defeat, just look at the World Cup. There is an equal genius for recovery, in less than 50 years, Scotland had become a powerhouse of invention and European intellectual thought, with men such as Adam Smith, David Hume, James Watt, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns.

opinion poll found that Scots thought he was doing the most effective job in government. However, his advisers and a mischievous press corps have a habit of tripping him up.

Mr Blair did not do himself any favours during the 1997 general election campaign when he compared the powers of the proposed Scottish parliament with an English parish council and said that sovereignty would rest with him. Deep down he seems also to resent the fact that, in spite of Labour honouring its commitment to deliver a Scottish parliament, the Scots seem a pretty ungrateful lot.

No sooner is the new power-house/parish council on the same books than support for the SNP and Scottish independence is on the rise again. Mr Blair needs Scottish votes which return about 50 MPs to Westminster and he just wishes that they would give devolution a chance.

While Downing Street insists that Mr Blair is the party's biggest asset in Scotland, there is also a hostility among many voters who believe he should stay out of Scottish affairs. Neil MacKenzie, a taxi driver from Inverness where Mr Blair avoided doing a walkabout, said: "Donald Dewar says his party is not run by London Labour but if so, why is Tony Blair up campaigning? What's he doing here when there are more pressing problems like Kosovo to deal with?"

side of Mr Blair could not understand what all the fuss was about. Speaking earlier in the day at RAF Lossiemouth where Mr Blair met families of Gulf servicemen, he said: "It's neither here nor there. You would have to have a long memory." The gaffe could be

shrugged off if it was an isolated incident.

The truth is that the normally sure-footed Premier has a problem with Scotland. His granny came from Glasgow's Govan, he was schooled in Fettes and a lot of people seem to want to like him. A recent



The defeat of the Scots at Culloden ended dreams of independence for 200 years

CAMPAIGN FOR SCOTLAND

Home rule good for economy

Independence would lead to a stronger Scottish economy, according to a report on the day the Scottish National Party launched its election manifesto. The David Hume Institute, a non-political think-tank, said that a devolved Edinburgh parliament was unlikely to strengthen the economy due to its limited powers over economic policy.

The SNP manifesto focuses on health, education, housing and business. The party's commitment to holding a referendum on independence within the parliament's first term was lost in a list of 14 priorities.

The party had promised to release a "two track" manifesto outlining policies for a devolved and independent Scotland to let voters compare and contrast the two.

Quote of the day

Paddy Ashdown, on the campaign trail in Edinburgh.

"The Tory manifesto is the longest apology in history. The SNP used to be right wing and now they are left wing and with Labour you don't know if you are getting old Labour or new Labour. But you can depend on the Liberal Democrats. With us you get what you see."

NHS challenge issued to Dewar

Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, was challenged about pay rises in the National Health Service during a campaign walkabout in Stirling. Paul McCrory, a nursing assistant from Wishaw, Lanarkshire, told Mr Dewar that the lack of money available was contributing to low morale among staff.

McLeish admits London control

The Scottish National Party accused Labour of being controlled from London after Mr McLeish, the party's leader, said that the party had listened and learnt from the Tories' mistakes at the 1997 general election. He said they were out of touch. We didn't listen. Our decisions and policies had London stamped all over them, with little relevance or sympathy for the needs of the Scottish people.

AGENDA

Today Tony Blair will take part in a phone-in at Moray Firth radio this morning and open a new A&E ward at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee. Charles Kennedy will be the main speaker at the Liberal Democrats' press conference in Edinburgh. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, will talk in Glasgow for Labour. The Green Party will launch its manifesto in Edinburgh. Fiona Hyslop, SNP housing spokeswoman, will outline the party's housing policy in Edinburgh.

We were to blame for 1997 rout, say Tories

By Magnus Linklater

THE Scottish Conservatives launched their manifesto yesterday in original style — by issuing an apology.

David McLeish, the party's leader in Scotland, admitted that the Tories' mistakes at the 1997 general election had led to their losing every Westminster seat they held there. "The people told us what they thought," he said. "We got it wrong. They said we were out of touch. We didn't listen. Our decisions and policies had London stamped all over them, with little relevance or sympathy for the needs of the Scottish people."

But he insisted that since then the party had listened and learnt, holding more than 500 meetings and hearing the views of 15,000 people. The result was a radical set of proposals that had been "made in Scotland" rather than dictated from Conservative Central Office. A set of seven commitments included a pledge not to raise taxes, promises to abolish university tuition fees, to guarantee full-time nursery places for four-year-olds, to introduce "modern matrons" into hospitals, and lift the beef-on-the-bone ban.

The most radical proposal of all would take schools out of local authority control and hand them over to local school boards, answerable to their communities. Their members would include local councillors, head teachers and representatives of individual school boards, including parents. They would be funded directly by the Scottish parliament.

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities reported that all the evidence suggested that while parents wanted to be consulted about their schools, they did not want to be involved in running them. "To separate them off would be a backward step," said a spokesman. "It would lose out on the holistic approach that local authorities can provide."

However, other education proposals, such as the abolition of tuition fees, are likely to draw more enthusiastic support, and place the Scottish Tories well to the left of the party in London.

Admitting that the party was now on a "policy tangent" from London, Mr McLeish said: "That is what devolution



McLeish said party had listened and learnt

is all about. We are right to be different, we are in the vanguard of policies, but we believe they will strike a chord with our colleagues down south. Who knows, they might adopt some of our ideas, once they see them tried out here."

He repeated his controversial remark that "the jury is out on the United Kingdom" and pledged that the Conservative Party in Scotland would make the new parliament work with in the United Kingdom.

These are heady days for the Scottish Tories. Freed of the responsibility that goes with power, or even the distant prospect of it, they feel able to say almost anything, even if it means abandoning ideas that were once sacrosanct. "The status quo is not an option," said one candidate briskly.

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CORRECTION

Giles Radice is the Labour MP for Durham North, not Conservative, as wrongly described in the letters page of April 7.

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Cot collapse caused death of baby girl

BY ALEX O'CONNELL

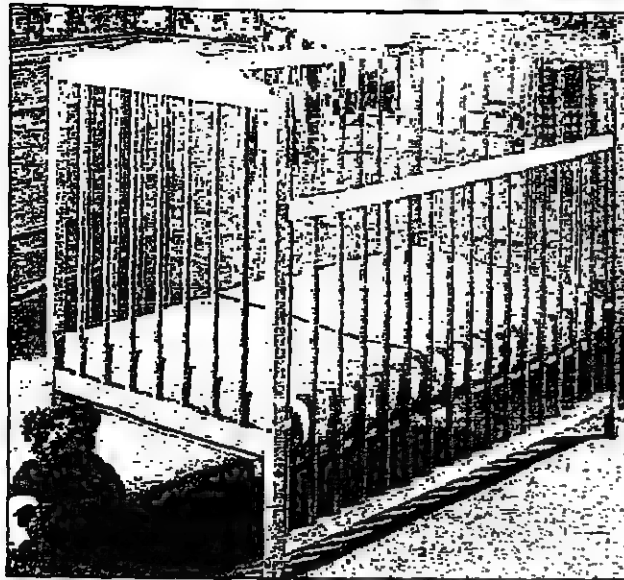
THE collapse of a cot from Mothercare was to blame for the death of a nine-month-old baby, an inquest has been told. Alexandra Harvey choked to death when the side of her cot fell across her neck as she played in it.

The girl was found unconscious by her mother, Catherine, who had left her to prepare breakfast. The baby had stopped breathing and was blue in the face, and her mother tried to revive her before the ambulance took her to hospital. The baby was transferred to a specialist unit at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, 50 miles away, and put on a life-support machine. After six days the doctors told the mother that there was no chance of recovery and the machine was switched off.

The cot, a £79.99 Epsom model, had been bought by Miss Harvey's parents when their daughter was pregnant, the inquest was told.

It was assembled by the child's father, Robert Smith, 25, who works in a timber yard. He carefully followed the instructions for putting together the flat-pack.

The inquest, in Colchester on Wednesday, heard from an expert witness — Laurence Liff, of ICE Ergonomics — who told the coroner that the collapse of the cot had been nothing to do with way it had been assembled. He said it was principally because of a



The self-assembly cot conforms to safety standards

design fault that meant it was not strong enough to stay together under the weight of the baby.

Mothercare, which was represented by a lawyer at the inquest, was not called to give evidence.

The coroner, Malcolm Weir, recorded a verdict of accidental death. "We are not here to apportion blame for the tragic incident but to find out the facts behind Alexandra's death. All I can do is let the manufacturers of the product know of the facts of this case and leave the ball in their park," Dr Weir said.

Miss Harvey, 21, said yesterday, after the inquest: "I want

everyone to be aware of the dangers. What happened to my beloved daughter can happen to someone else's baby."

"I wouldn't want any other mother to go through the agony I have been through: her death has destroyed me."

Miss Harvey added: "Bob knew what he was doing and it was perfectly straightforward. I had chosen that particular cot because Mothercare have a good reputation and the cot had a British Standards Institution Kitemark."

The instructions on the best-selling cot said it was suitable for children up to four years old or a weight of up to 18 kilograms (39lb). "Alex was much

smaller and lighter than that," said Miss Harvey, who has not received an apology from Mothercare.

The Coroner's Officer, Ian Hunter, said yesterday: "The cot complied to the British standard. If the British standard isn't satisfactory, that's another matter."

Mothercare said in a statement: "The outcome of tests concluded that the circumstances surrounding the death of Alexandra Harvey appear to be consistent with the explanation that was provided by her parents."

"It would seem that a series of unfortunate factors came together to produce a tragic result, the death of a baby, with no one person or factor to blame. Mothercare's thoughts are with Alexandra's parents at this very difficult time."

The firm said the cot conformed to safety standards and that trading standards officers had been involved in the inquiry into the death and were taking no further action.

Mothercare cots include advice to "check regularly that all bolts and fastenings are tight". As an added precaution since Alex's death last November, Mothercare said it had added a "very visible" warning to the mattress base of all new cots which reads: "Warning — failure to tighten could cause the sides, ends or base to collapse. Your child may be injured by falling components or become trapped beneath them."



Alexandra Harvey was found by her mother, with the side of the cot lying on her neck

Phone bill revealed suicide wife was having an affair

BY A CORRESPONDENT

A COMPANY director grieving for his wife, who had committed suicide, learnt from her mobile telephone bill that she had been having an affair. Ken Montgomery, 40, told an inquest yesterday that he had had no idea his wife, Carolee, was being unfaithful.

The inquest was told that police called in to investigate her death

found a mystery number on her telephone bill. They traced it to a businessman who, after being told that Mrs Montgomery, 41, had killed herself, admitted having an affair with her. He had seen her during business trips in London.

The inquest in Cardiff was told that Mr and Mrs Montgomery had been married for ten years and had a five-year-old son, Kenneth. They moved back to Britain from Dubai

last year and bought a £400,000 house at Penarth, near Cardiff.

They had been due to spend a weekend sailing together in Portsmouth, but Mrs Montgomery had stayed at home after an argument about money. Two days later, when Mr Montgomery returned, he had found his wife dead in a fume-filled car in the garage. She had drunk half a bottle of whisky.

Mr Montgomery said: "I just

couldn't understand why she had done it. We had a new £400,000 home and the night before I went to Portsmouth we had had a lovely night out with friends. I couldn't believe she had killed herself just because of the heated discussion we had had."

It was only later, after he received the mobile telephone bill, that he began to suspect there was another motive for his wife's death. "It was a

real kick in the guts when I found out about the affair. It was like my wife was leading a double life away from myself and our son. It has been traumatic and has deeply affected my son and myself. Now all I want to do is close the chapter and get on with the job of bringing up Kenneth."

Lawrence Addicot, the Cardiff Coroner, recorded a verdict of suicide. After the hearing Detective Constable Mike Pitt, who investigated Mrs

Montgomery's death, said that the same number kept cropping up on the mobile telephone bill. "When I spoke to this chap it turned out that he had met Mrs Montgomery a couple of months previously and struck up a relationship with her."

"She took to phoning him constantly and they met a couple of times in London. He was obviously very fond of her and was horrified about what had happened to her."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Snowdon railway set for OK

Environmental groups are close to losing their fight to stop the rebuilding of the former Welsh Highland Railway through Snowdonia National Park. John Prescott, the Environment and Transport Secretary, said that he was minded to approve the 21-mile route, against the recommendation of a public inquiry inspector. He is asking the Ffestiniog Railway Company for a detailed survey of rock faces near the Aberglaslyn tunnels to ensure that work does not cause rock falls. The route would run from Dinas, south of Caernarfon, through the national park to Porthmadog.

Cider with Dan

The pub featured by Laurie Lee in his book *Cider with Rosie* has been sold to a friend of the late author. Lee was a regular at the 300-year-old Woolpack Inn at Slad, Gloucestershire, which has been bought by Dan Chadwick.

Black stroke risk

Black people in Britain are twice as likely to have a stroke than white people, with Caribbean immigrants having the highest death rate. The reason is likely to be genetic or lifestyle, according to a report in the *British Medical Journal*.

Water firm fined

South West Water has been fined £5,000 with £5,529 costs after admitting supplying water unfit for human consumption. Cullompton magistrates were told that discoloured water was supplied to villages in mid Devon in October 1997.

The crying game

Courses for town criers have opened at a school in Crystal Palace, South London. The organisers expect a surge in demand for town criers because of the millennium celebrations. The students include a former sergeant major.

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Fresh spy claims hit Zhu's US visit

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN WASHINGTON

FRESH allegations that China stole top-secret nuclear weapons research from the United States in order to improve Beijing's neutron bomb placed a new strain on an already tense visit to the US by Zhu Rongji, the Chinese Prime Minister.

The new spying scandal, the second in as many months, came as China and the US struggled to clinch a trade deal that would pave the way for Beijing's entry into the World Trade Organisation.

In 1996 US intelligence sources reported information from a trusted Chinese agent who said that the Chinese intelligence service was boasting that vital US weapons data had been obtained and applied to China's neutron bomb programme. The spy said the secret research had been leaked in 1995.

The White House has hitherto maintained that there is no evidence of Chinese nuclear espionage during the Clinton presidency, but *The New York Times* reported that Sandy Berger, now the US National Security Adviser, was told of the possible new theft of material relating to neutron bomb production in April 1996.

The new scandal could not come at a more embarrassing time for Mr Zhu and President Clinton as they attempt to paper over issues as America's bulging trade deficit with China, human rights violations and allegations of illicit Chinese funding for the 1996 Clinton presidential campaign. The two leaders were due to attend an informal dinner together last night.

In a welcome speech to the Chinese leader yesterday, Mr Clinton pointedly referred to the "differences" between the United States and China. In response, Mr Zhu said he saw no area of disagreement that could not be settled through "friendly consultations".

The fresh spying charges emerged as Chinese and US officials attempted to broker a deal that would prepare the way for China's admission to the WTO, which has been Beijing's goal for the past 13 years. US officials said yesterday that a full agreement now seemed "unlikely".

The neutron bomb, developed by the US in the 1970s, uses enhanced radiation to kill people while leaving buildings unaffected. China is believed to have built a neutron bomb in the 1980s, using research stolen from the US, but found it defective during tests. The new allegations suggest that the information stolen in 1995 had allowed China to iron out problems in their bomb design.

DISSIDENT ARREST

Beijing: With an unerring instinct to do the wrong thing at the wrong time, Chinese police detained a dissident for "endangering state security" just as Zhu Rongji, the Prime Minister, was arriving in the US (James Pringle writes).

The Information Centre of Human Rights in Hong Kong said that Fu Shen, a human rights activist based in Shaanxi province, had intended to pay respects at the grave of Hu Yaobang, a moderate communist, in advance of the tenth anniversary of his death on April 15.



Solitary Guitarist, by Vasili Perov, one of the works stolen from the Russian State Museum in St Petersburg this week in what police believe is part of a campaign of art theft to order from major Russian collections

Thieves plunder Russian museums to order

FROM ANNA BLUNDY IN MOSCOW

THE theft of two paintings from the Russian Museum in St Petersburg this week is part of a new trend of stealing to order, experts believe. *Solitary Guitarist* and a sketch for the painting *Troika*, both by Vasili Perov, a 19th century artist, were taken in a dawn raid on Tuesday.

"There has been a surge of interest in art and antiques among the new rich in the past decade," said Aleksandr Shevchuk, deputy head of the cultural and historical crimes department of the Moscow police. "Thefts to order are always extremely difficult to uncover because so many people are involved."

Art theft in St Petersburg alone has skyrocketed in the past few years, from 15 crimes in 1992 to 178 in 1997. In 1994 four men broke into the St Petersburg Library and took \$300 million (£188 million) worth of manuscripts including medieval European, ancient Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan and Hebrew scripts.

Twelve people were arrested in connection with the crime which was believed to have been ordered by an Israeli collector, though he was never identified.

Vladimir Gusev, the director of the Russian Museum, believes the paintings stolen this week were ordered by a private collector, but says the works are so well known it will not be possible to display them. "The best thing he can do is to bring the things back anonymously," he said.

Russia's museums and galleries lack the funds for adequate anti-theft systems. Only the Hermitage, housed in the winter palace of the tsars in St Petersburg, has invested in Western-style security.

WORLD SUMMARY

'Human fly' sues TV show over trap

New York: A Norwegian daredevil known as the "Human Fly" is suing a television programme for \$2.25 million (£1.4 million) for betraying him to police after he parachuted off the World Trade Centre. Thor Alex Kappfjell was arrested last month after completing an unprecedented hat-trick of city skyscrapers. Earlier jumps were from the Empire State and Chrysler buildings.

Mr Kappfjell, 32, alleges that the syndicated television show *Extra*, which had bought videotape of his stunts, delayed payment and told police where he was so it could film his arrest. "Police marched in, and *Extra* was there shooting it," Mr Kappfjell said.

When he asked the producer to put up bail, he was allegedly told: "I do not pay criminals." Mr Kappfjell walked free six days later, having agreed to do a week's community service.

Shift to right

Klagenfurt: Jörg Haider, leader of the far-right Freedom Party, was elected Governor of Carinthia, the Austrian APA agency said. The party won 42 per cent of the state's vote in elections last month. (AFP)

Amnesty denied

Cape Town: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission denied amnesty to the killers of Chris Hani, leader of the Communist Party and seen, until his death in 1993, as a future President.

Tehran release

Tehran: German businessman Helmut Hofer, 57, sentenced to death for having sexual relations with an Iranian woman, is to be released pending a final decision. He has served two years in jail. (AFP)

Timor backlash

Dili: Thousands of anti-independence militiamen, some accused of massacres, have vowed to step up their fight against separatists who want East Timor to break away from Indonesia. (AP)

Rebel shoot-out

Freeborn: Thirty-one people have been killed, including 14 civilians, in fighting between Sierra Leonean rebels and Guinean troops of the Ecomog intervention force near Kambila, it was reported. (AFP)

US jets hit Iraq

Washington: American F18 aircraft have bombed a missile site in southern Iraq. The US Central Command said the missile site on the al-Faw peninsula was a threat to shipping traffic in the Gulf. (AFP)

Missile threat

Delhi: Beijing's Military Academy has recommended China redeploy medium- and long-range missiles against India after its nuclear tests last year, it was reported. (Reuters)

Gun law targeted

Boston: Gun club patrons are suing for the right to shoot at images of real people, including Hitler, during target practice, an action banned for some clubs by a new law. (AP)

'Bronx rapist' confesses after police kill suspect

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

POLICE have arrested the suspected "Bronx rapist" whose attacks on as many as 51 women transformed the political landscape in New York.

Isaac Jones, 38, a night office cleaner, reportedly confessed after he was arrested outside a pawn shop where his girlfriend had tried to get cash for jewellery taken from one of the rapist's victims.

In February, during the massive manhunt for the serial rapist, four Street Crimes Unit officers killed Amadou Diallo, an unarmed West African immigrant, in a hail of gunfire, provoking daily demonstrations and throwing into doubt the political future of Rudolph Giuliani, the city's Mayor.

Mr Jones has been charged with four rapes, but is believed to have assaulted as many as 51 women in 39 separate incidents over the past six years.

Police made the arrest after a woman walked into a pawn shop in the South Bronx with jewellery stolen from two victims of a double rape on Valentine's Day. Because she gave a false name, police stationed a female undercover agent in the shop to await her return.

When she came back, two months later, a waiting squad swooped on Mr Jones as he sat outside in a car. He was identified from the same police sketch that bore a superficial resemblance to Mr Diallo, shot dead about a mile from Mr Jones's home.

Police questioned Mr Jones for hours before he confessed, telling detectives that he started raping women because he was himself raped by a stranger when aged seven.

Co-workers described him as charming and were shocked to learn that many of

the rapes took place between 4am and 5am, after he had finished a night shift polishing floors in Manhattan skyscrapers.

"He was always smiling, laughing and giggling," said Stephanie Wright, 48, a night-shift secretary at a law firm where he worked. "He was sweet. He made me laugh."

Howard Safir, the police commissioner, said Mr Jones had raped one mother in front of her child. "This is one of the highest numbers of serial rapes," he said.

More than 1,000 demonstrators, including Hollywood stars and Washington politicians, have been arrested during protests against the shooting of Mr Diallo. The furor has put in doubt a possible New York bid by Mr Giuliani for a US Senate seat against Hillary Clinton next year.

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Disney bows to Catholic pressure

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN LOS ANGELES

panied company with the Royal Ballet. It was reported at the time that he had fallen out with Sir Anthony after criticising the choreography. As with Durante, the Hungarian's "volatile" dancing style was said to be matched by his off-stage persona.



groups, often because of cutting-edge Miramax releases, among them *Priest*, the British film about a gay Catholic pastor that was released in the US in 1994 to a chorus of pickets and protests. Disney is also accused of operating "gay-friendly" employment policies.

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REPORT EDITING BY JACQUES BOUTONNET

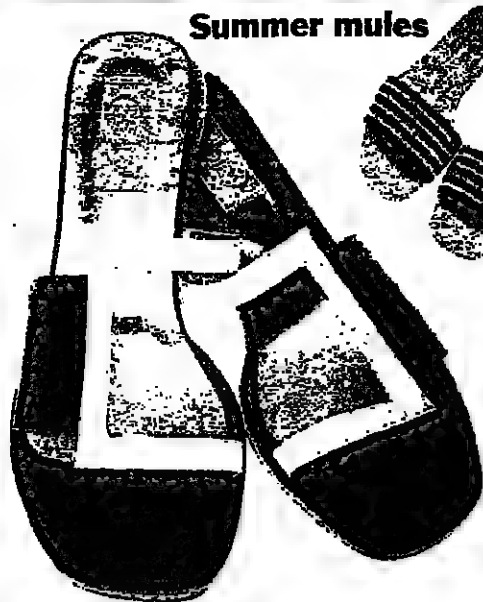
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1. *Species* 2000–5000. Selected from the most recent surveys in England and Wales, 1990–1999, as reported under the UK Birds Breeding Bird Schemes.

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The power of posh paint

Is there any point paying pots of money for designer paint?
Grace Bradberry reports

If you have a talent for extravagance, you will know how versatile this particular gift can be. Whereas dexterity at the harp does not necessarily translate into nimble fingers at the Nintendo, extravagance can leap from one retail category to another with the ease and speed of nits in a nursery class.

Six months ago, when I moved into my first flat, I knew nothing of the existence of designer paint. I could recite the name of every major store in New Bond Street but I had never heard of Paint Library. In this pre-diluvian state I bought a five-litre tub of B&Q white matt emulsion and saw no reason why I should not splash it across the length and breadth of my flat. First, however, it was necessary to strip the floral 1970s wallpaper coated in baby-blue emulsion, and by the time this was complete I had seen the light.

Today I would no sooner do a B&Q whitewash than fill my freezer with economy burgers, drink Asil Spumante or laugh at Jim Davidson's jokes.

White paint, indeed any paint, now presents itself as an ethical dilemma. They could feature it on *The Moral Maze* and it would not seem out of place. Can it ever, in any circumstances, be right to spend £24 on a 2.5-litre tub of paint when you can buy the same amount of Dulux for £12.99?

You can reason that designer paint is very new Labour — No 10 has reportedly been redecorated in Paint Library (£24 for 2.5 litres of matt emulsion); you can tell yourself that Kylie Minogue has Sophie Rose on her walls (Paint Library again). Yet when the price rises above Farrow & Ball's £17.99 for 2.5 litres, and the company address says Chelsea, the conscience gives a twang.

Oddly, I felt no such mental turmoil choosing a sofa from The Conran Shop rather than Ikea. But then the thing about paint is that it is meant to be cheap. Read any interior-design book and it will reassure you that "paint is an inexpensive way to transform a room", and though the moment I read this I knew it couldn't be strictly true — nothing is cheap if you really put your mind to it — the mantra has lodged in my brain.

Whenever I flip through a John Oliver swatch book (£23.21 for a 2.5-litre tin), I feel as if I am wrestling with the Devil. I want to side with the angels and buy Crown Expressions but my dreams are now coloured in Hornblende, Hunter Dunn and Chalcedony — all from Paint Library.

I'm not convinced that designer paint is really any different from any other kind, and I have still less confidence in my ability to deploy it to best effect. When I enter the more fashionable paint boutiques I feel like a 15-stone woman wandering into Gucci.

Rula Theodoris, a freelance colour consultant, insists that the more expensive paints are generally better. "For example, red is one of the most difficult colours to reproduce and with, say, John Oliver, you have a purer colour."

On the other hand, I've read an interview with a designer who said that he always used Dulux, and that success could be achieved with any mass-market range provided one had colour sense. But colour sense is exactly what interior designers are selling, so offering to use cheap paint may well be the equivalent of personal shoppers who charge £500, then take you to Miss Selfridge. No doubt even this

chap has lapses of ascetic intent and splashes John Oliver's Imari Red across his walls in the dead of night.

In truth, though, the red argument is a red herring where I'm concerned. I will not be putting Salem Red on my walls (Lawrence T. Bridgeman's Old Village Paint range, £14.95 a quart), nor Fired Earth's Better Class Red.

Using varying shades of off-white in panels, squares, stripes and blocks remains, as far as I'm concerned, the *dernier cri* of chic. It also negates the need to match tones and "play" with clashing colours. But there is a whole world of nuance, a thousand social dangers, in the colour white.

In the absence of any innate feeling for colour, I am avoiding Laura Ashley's Country White simply because of the name, redolent as it is of idyllic cottage interiors tucked away in edge-of-town housing estates. I have also given in when it comes to Farrow & Ball's Off-White, Old White, Wall White and Lime White, which all look fawn to me.

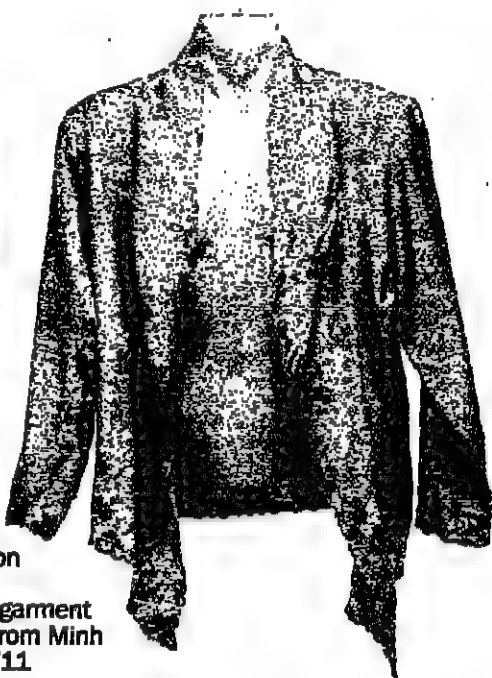
Instead, after six months of agonising, a long and distressing lilac phase, and the acquisition of approximately 20 different colour charts (Zoffany, Sanderson, Cole & Son, Marston & Langinger, Annie Sloan, Auro, Dulux Trade, Macpherson), I am now fixated on the 24 shades of Off White produced by Papers & Paints. No other paint company will now do. Distressingly, it is also the most expensive range I have so far discovered.

● Jane Shilling is on holiday

Objects of desire

■ Chanel's new powder looks fantastic on the dressing table. Housed in a rectangular opaque glass bottle, the brush cleverly twists on to the top, creating an elegant blusher brush. £20, Powder Light by Chanel, available from department stores (0171-493 3836).

■ Based on an antique Vietnamese shirt, this version is made from cotton with floral trellis embroidery. The craftsmanship is superb, creating a garment that is wonderfully individual. £38, from Minh Mang, 182 Battersea Park Road SW11 (0171-498 3233).



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Channel 5's Kirsty Young



Holiday reporter Mary Nightingale



Kate Thornton of Top of the Pops



Radio 1 DJ Zoë Ball

Send in the clones

Are they cloning people already? I ask because Sybil Ruscoe, the sports reporter recruited to Channel 4's cricket team, looks the image of Channel 5's news presenter Kirsty Young, who's a lot like Mary Nightingale, who's just a gunk of hair gel removed from the DJ Zoë Ball, who's a mere half an eyelid cheekier than the new Top of the Pops presenter Kate Thornton. Television seems like an endless screening of an old B-movie called *Invasion of the Baby-Faced Blondes*.

It's cruel, it's trivial, but in a visual medium the jobs — for men and women — inevitably go with the looks. Outside certain troublespots, the aesthetics of television admit the full diversity of the female form, from the dishevelment of *Ground Force's* Charlie Dimmock to the poise of Carol Vorderman and the maturity of Anne Robinson. Only the last bastions — news, sport and pop music — are the territory of the Baby-Faced Blondes.

The BFBs have become a kind of media elite corps, deployed in the most desperate

Lookalike baby-faced blondes have become television's elite corps — deployed by broadcasting bosses to ease the most desperate situations, says Celia Brayfield

situations. Broadcasting bosses fear that nobody over the age of ten watches *TOTP*, nobody under the age of 50 watches cricket, nobody watches news unless there's a war on and many people can't watch Channel 5 anyway. They believe that everyone will watch a BFB.

In a hearts-and-minds battle, when a BFB goes in there will be a hiatus while the enemy farts about marvelling that she can walk and read the Autocue at the same time. It worked when John Major put his Government's BFB, Virginia Bottomley, in charge of dismantling the health service, and it's now working like a dream with Sybil Ruscoe.

Old farts of all ages were combat-ready once MCC had been dragged doddering and harrumphing into the age of

equal opportunities and Channel 4 had captured the rights to the Test match. Channel 4 sent in the BFB and the enemy fell about, dithering over her ash-blond hair, fantasising that she will "scamper in her flowing white dress to gather the ball hit by her hero", nodding tolerantly when she confessed that she had never actually played cricket, and drafting lucrative contracts to wave under her pert little nose.

Would a male reporter with similar credentials be lauded with such guff? I don't think so. It can be years before this bezellement wears off — as it seems to have done at last with Channel 5's BFB, Kirsty Young, whose interviews were criticised, in a recent Independent Television Commission report, for being fact-free fluff dressed up as current affairs.

I intend no disrespect to the BFBs themselves. They can't help their looks — give or take a few highlights — nor can they help the medium's hiring policies. In accusing television producers of sexism, I am singing such an old song that the majority of women in work today probably rate it as an ancient folk melody. The difference now is that news chiefs are not trivialising women by hiring female reporters appar-

ently modelled on Barbie; they are trivialising themselves.

The contrast between the BFBs and the women whose actions make the news is unmissable. With the American Secretary of State Madeleine Albright spelling out Nato's peace terms, it seems ludicrous that no woman of her age could get a job reporting on her speeches. No woman of Clare Short's appearance would be allowed to introduce the footage of her among the Kosovan refugees, nor would a woman resembling the tennis player Amelie Mauresmo be hired to dinkie the BBC teacups during Wimbledon. All this looks bad. It's time to be brave, chaps. Drop your leish for BFBs and send out real women to chase your ratings.



The latest BFB presenter is Sybil Ruscoe, who is to report on the cricket for Channel 4

Hacked off

I splashed out £72 for two dress-circle tickets to a musical a couple of nights ago, which is something I can definitely recommend if *U2* is your mind not slurring your coffee so noisily while you're reading this? It's so off-putting... If you enjoy the razzle-dazzle of a show like *Chicago*, and you don't mind your evening being regularly interrupted by bronchial outbursts loud enough to drown out even Ethel Merman.

Obviously, this makes the theatregoing especially rewarding if you happen to be an ear, nose and throat specialist, because the audience is full of your potential patients. Maybe these people have mistaken the theatre for Harley Street consulting rooms and imagine that the entertainment on stage is just a posher version of those three-year-old magazines you get given to pass the time in the waiting areas of less fancy doctors. Or perhaps the coughing is some sort of code.

Like Morse: three coughs and a nose blow mean "I'll bet the butler did it".

The only other explanation must be that if you turned to the theatre and concert listings in this newspaper, and used a high-grade microscope to scrutinise those little boxes advertising each show, you'd find a subliminal message in between the critics' quotes of "Hilarious" or "Steal a ticket, just make sure you go!" which reads: "Do you have the sort of scary cough that sounds as if alien beings are currently hatching inside your throat? Then go see this show tonight!"

You innocently believe that you're just flicking through the entertainment listings, but as soon as you close the newspaper you find yourself in a trance, involuntarily picking up the phone and dialling a theatre (you: "Hello, I'd like two seats for tonight's show." Box Office: "Have you got one of those hacking coughs that ruin the performance for anyone sitting within 12 rows of you?" You: "Actually, I do." Box Office: "In that case I'm going to have to seat you in the middle of the most expensive and crowded section of the auditorium. May I request that you do absolutely nothing between now and curtain rise to ameliorate your cough?").

Harold Pinter has grown so fed up with noisy audiences puncturing his work that he has just banned the sale of sweets at the Palace Theatre, Watford, where he is currently directing the world premiere of Simon Gray's new play *The Late Middle Classes*.

A notice in the foyer reads: "Because of the delicate atmosphere of this play, the director has suggested that the sale of confectionery being consumed during the performance may cause distraction to the audience."

And Pinter's not the only one who's mad at the coughers and the wrapper-rustlers. Kurt Masur recently walked out halfway through conducting Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony at New York's Lincoln Centre.

"His message is so human, so full of pain, so full of beauty, and we tried our best," Masur complained, after throwing down his baton. "but with the uncontrolled coughing in the audience, I felt more and more that no-

body could concentrate. So I left. I just wanted to make people aware that they were disturbing the process of listening."

It's not that much better when concert audiences wait until a movement ends to break into a cough. Actually, it's a little sinister. Have these people consciously been restraining themselves until then? Or do they just like to clear their throats? If it's the latter, do they also make a point of relieving themselves every time they happen to pass a loo?

Mobile phones are the newest curse in the stalls. When the Juilliard Quartet performed in Guangzhou a few weeks ago, the recital had to be stopped because chaos had erupted as mobile phones and pagers chirruped like songbirds through the auditorium, and as the concertgoers took it into their heads to stroll around in search of better seats.

Now, at the theatre where *Chicago* was showing, the far-sighted managers had come up with a novel way of diverting your anger in the £36 seats from the surrounding chorus of coughing. Their solution was based on the "If you want to take your mind off your worries, wear tight shoes" principle, whereby you concentrate so intently on your aching feet that you forget about everything else.

The idea they came up with was very simple but effective. It was red plastic binoculars. These binoculars, which have the same, NASA-verified magnifying power as a milk bottle, cost 40p to hire: hour for hour, this is almost the same cost as a car rental.

They were obviously hoping that the people seated in the dress circle would be so incensed at not having been warned that the show was being performed by teeny pigmies — and hence required the use of binoculars — that they wouldn't even notice all the noise around them.

First theatre manager: "And to make sure the punters all get really mad, we'll fix it so that the only coins that will release these binoculars from their mooring are two 20p pieces."

Second manager: "Could you say that again? I couldn't hear over the coughing."

If anything, cinemas are worse. They've been overtaken by people who can't afford proper apartments at London's ridiculous prices, so have settled for teeny, kitchenless flats and treating their cinema seat like a dining room. It's now common to see members of the audience passing guacamole dips, ketchup and pepper mills from row to row.

There could be an enterprising way forward. A recent survey of doctors found that the majority of them felt they deserved a free upgrade on flights if they agreed, when checking in, to help out in a mid-air emergency. "Being taken for granted sticks in the throat," said a man at the British Medical Association. So why don't theatres offer to upgrade car, nose and throat specialists from the back of the upper circle to the dress circle seats if they agree to unstuck a few of the theatregoers' throats during the show?

OK, I've finished for this week. Thanks for restraining yourselves. I appreciate it. You can go back to slurping your coffee now.



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A little cut now goes a long way...

... at least in Britain, if not

Europe, says Anatole Kaletsky

Yesterday was a crucial day in the economic histories of Britain and Europe. The announcement of a half-point rate cut by the European Central Bank was the Frankfurt bank's first monetary action since it took control of economic policy in the 11 countries of euroland.

By acting more boldly than expected, the bank tried to shake off the image of complacency from which it has suffered since its failure to respond to the worldwide financial crisis and the economic downturn in Germany last autumn. But whether yesterday's move lays the foundations for a healthy economic recovery in Europe will depend largely on whether Wim Duisenberg, the bank's President, admits to a new monetary philosophy in the weeks ahead.

In Britain, too, there is more uncertainty than usual about the consequences of yesterday's rate cut. The Bank of England may have taken a risk by cutting interest rates for the sixth time in seven months, on this occasion by a quarter point. The British rate cut was announced against a background of buoyant car sales, accelerating house prices and record levels of remortgage borrowing, as householders lock into borrowing rates at the under-5 per cent of just 5 per cent or so over ten years.

I welcome the Bank's decision to add more monetary fuel to an economy that may already be set for take-off. In my view, sticking rigidly to an arbitrary inflation target is less vital than trying to reduce unemployment further by boosting economic growth. But in terms of the Bank's strict anti-inflationary mandate, yesterday's decision may well seem mistaken if it becomes the catalyst for a new boom in housing, consumer spending and financial services. That, in turn, could prompt a panic reaction from the Bank and the markets, generating expectations that British interest rates will soon rise and push up the pound.

These predictions are, of course, just personal intuitions. Plenty of economists take the opposite line, issuing warnings that industry is still stuck in recession and that interest rates must be cut to the continental level before British companies can have a fair chance to compete. Rather than argue with my fellow economic seers about our respective readings of the statistical entrails, I want to devote the rest of this space to a broader question which, to judge by my postbag, seems very perplexing to non-economists, including politicians and businessmen.

Why do I get so excited about apparently tiny shifts in monetary policy, like the ones announced yesterday? The simple answer is that a "mere" quarter or half-point is proportionally quite a lot when interest rates are as low as they are today. Yesterday's European rate cut reduced the cost of servicing a euro loan by almost a fifth and, in theory, raised the value of European assets, such as shares and property, by almost as much.

The second, more profound, reason for worrying about small changes in interest rates relates to business psychology and monetary dogma. If a change in interest rates is presented in a dogmatic monetarist framework, as a one-off event motivated purely by inflation or money supply statistics and unrelated to business conditions and unemployment, it may indeed be dismissed as irrelevant. But if a small monetary move is perceived as a sign of commitment to steady economic growth and a harbinger of further action, it can trigger a much more powerful effect.

The central bank's action can be seen as a national "insurance policy" against recession, to quote the term used by Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the US Federal Reserve Board, in the midst of last year's global financial crisis. The Fed cut interest rates by only three quarters of a point, but this modest action had a huge worldwide impact, because of the perception that Mr Greenspan would go on cutting until the threat of a global recession disappeared.

The European bank, and before it the Bundesbank, has adopted exactly the opposite approach. Even when it has cut interest rates, it has always pretended that its monetary decisions had nothing to do with unemployment or the threat of recession. It has insisted that there would be no further action, even if the economy continued to slump.

Again last night, Mr Duisenberg said that the large rate cut was designed to preclude speculation about any further easing and added that the bank "is not following a counter-cyclical policy". Such a statement of indifference to the state of the economic cycle have naturally diminished the beneficial effects of European rate cuts. It was hardly surprising that the euro fell in the markets with almost every word Mr Duisenberg spoke.

This observation leads me to another question about interest rates that readers often ask. How can I say, as I did above, that an interest rate of 5.25 per cent may be too low for Britain, while insisting that continental interest rates may need to be cut even below 2.5 per cent? This is only puzzling if you ignore the role of interest rates in managing demand. Europe is stuck in deep recession with vast unemployment. Britain is pulling out of a brief economic slowdown with a much higher proportion of its people in jobs. Europe needs exceptionally low interest rates to pull it out of recession, while Britain requires roughly neutral rates, comparable to those in America, to sustain adequate growth without inflation.

There is no paradox here, unless you think interest rates and monetary policy should have nothing to do with managing demand and countering economic cycles. If you think that, perhaps you should apply to be the next President of the European bank.

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Will they never learn?

Nato's leaders are treading the path that led to insanity in Vietnam

Another middle way has not worked. The Great Bombing Pretext is collapsing in Kosovo, as it was bound to collapse. Foreign policy is revealed not as focus-grouped, glamorous kid-machismo but as something that kills people. Nato's bombing adventure in Kosovo looked good for a day or two. But it was always cynical and ill thought-out. Now, with generals on both sides of the Atlantic screaming no, the "immaculate coercion" of the cruise missile war must be followed by the real thing.

In the United States this week I have heard almost no support for Nato's belief that "bombing alone" would win security for Kosovo's Albanians. I hear only Lyndon Johnson's notorious Vietnam quote, "I never felt that this war would be won from the air". Yesterday's *New York Times*/CBS poll was clear. Will airstrikes stop President Milosevic? Sixty per cent say no. Will America send ground troops? Seventy-five per cent say yes. The 24 American ground attack helicopters being sent to Albania are the first swallows of an awesome summer. Last October Western diplomats told Mr Milosevic to give autonomy to Kosovo "or else". He was threatening no state, and perpetrating no greater evil than those being ignored by the West in the Caucasus or condoned as a *fait accompli* in Bosnia. But great men had said "or else", and the networks were watching. So now it is "or else".

Europe thinks it goes to war when diplomacy has failed. America thinks it goes to war when Europe has failed. It is grimly intriguing that the American pro-war lobby is made up of mostly younger people who do not remember (or have forgotten) the Vietnam escalation. The issue, once again, is not the plausibility of the operation but in the esteem of Uncle Sam and confidence in America's military omnipotence. As for whether a Kosovan war will be anything but an American one, you can hear, read and talk about this subject from dawn to dusk and not hear a word about British involvement — beyond the complaint that "America is having to rescue Europe from another of its messes".

The collapse of "bombing alone" this past fortnight has been spectacular. The misreading of Mr Milosevic by Nato deserves to rank with Gallipoli and Pearl Harbor in the annals of military incompetence.

Bill Clinton and Tony Blair could not have been more clear in the objective. It was to "stop the killing and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and force Milosevic to grant the region partial autonomy". The bombing has achieved the opposite. By targeting cities, factories and bridges, and hitting enough houses to kill civilians (including, of all obscenities, native Kosovans in Pristina), the bombs have increased support for the regime and made compromise less likely.

Why leaders pursue strategies that so regularly fail (as this approach failed in Iraq) is for psychologists to answer. Mr Milosevic's response was exactly as predicted. Faced with demands that he accept Nato troops on his soil and a promise that they would not be imposed, he had to judge whether that promise was believable. He sensibly concluded that it was not. He urgently moved his formidable army into Kosovo, where until this week not a single bomber had been able to find it. In two weeks the Yugoslav leader cleared half the province of its Albanian population and, in grim Balkan fashion, treated perhaps hundreds of Albanian men as putative KLA fighters and shot them dead. Mr Milosevic is now in a position to offer a "monitored ceasefire" but with the Kosovo Liberation Army truly crushed. It defies belief that anyone in London or Washington thought bombing alone would achieve any other outcome.

Nato spin-doctors are frantically trying to express "surprise" that Mr Milosevic moved so fast and acted so ruthlessly, and argue that bombing alone was always a long-term strategy, whatever that means. The American press hoots derision at such excuses. The Pentagon and the Ministry of Defence are known to have been sceptics about bombing

from the start. In the nearest Washington comes to an official statement, "sources" this week admitted that there never was any coherence to bombing alone. As a State Department official admitted: "We have accomplished nothing. The policy is dead."

Whether Mr Milosevic would have behaved with the ruthlessness of the past two weeks without the bombing is, of course, horribly moot. What is certain is that before the arrival of Madeleine Albright, Robin Cook, Richard Holbrooke and the world's most powerful bombs, Mr Milosevic was conducting a guerrilla war with the equally ruthless KLA, a group that had scant local support until its cause was "adopted" by Britain and others.

The United Nations last week put the Albanian-Serb balance of atrocities at roughly even. After the arrival of the grandees, Mr Milosevic changed tack and did what he did in Bosnia. He has killed thousands and displaced half a million people, while conceding not one inch to Nato. He has enforced an Albanian diaspora, tweaked Uncle Sam's nose and won the grudging support of Russia and China. Important if there is to be a land war. In other words, he has done precisely what President Clinton and Mr Blair said they would never let happen.

This week Nato's leaders, having learnt nothing, came up with a new pledge. It was that the displaced people of Kosovo would soon march home under the banner of a Nato protection force. If I were a Kosovan, I would give no more weight to such promises than to an offer of autonomy from Belgrade. The West gave similar pledges under Dayton to displaced Muslims in Bosnia. They have not been honoured.

We now have "the ground option". The Pentagon is reported to have considered the invasion of

Kosovo so crazy that it refused to draw up contingency plans. That has had to change under presidential order. Schemes of Vietnamese fanaticism are now being woven. They involve the air cavalry "clearing" corridors into Kosovo for an infantry advance through the mountains. Behind them will come returning Albanian villagers, to be resettled in safe havens along the border, secured by modern technology from marauding Serbs. What the RAF has left standing of Pristina may have to be flattened. But as they said in Vietnam, you sometimes have to destroy the village to save the village.

In the heat of war, a fine line divides practicality from insanity. An idea later dismissed as risible, like bombing Cambodia or decimating North Vietnam, may have seemed serviceable at the time. Desperate leaders need desperate ways out of corners. Today's armies, designed to confront communism, are being marched into battle by fidgety leaders to get nasty pictures off the television screen. A wild compulsion appears to have seized Western liberalism as it gazes ogle-eyed at whatever atrocity the networks have selected for the nightly "grief pornography" slot. It is as if, with the Cold War over, liberals now want their turn at playing war games. They want to feel the surge of power, the roar of the chopper blade, the thrill of "bombs away".

If I thought for one minute that the appalling destruction America and Britain are now raining down on Yugoslavia could conceivably achieve its declared objectives, I might ponder the justice of such action. There is such a thing as a world order and it does merit imposition, as in the Falklands and Kuwait. Though the integrity of states should be respected, it is not absolute. But in Kosovo no virtue appears achievable. A European state, already afflicted by a communist past and a brutalist present, is being plunged into further misery. Those we purport to help are being killed and exiled. The best we can hope is that Mr Milosevic declares his cleansing at an end and invites the "monitors" back, as he did last October. That will be a Nato defeat. But it will be a lesser defeat than the madness now on offer from the hawks of Washington and London.

comment@the-times.co.uk



Simon Jenkins

If you order a third bottle of rioja at lunch on a weekday, the waiter will tilt towards you a label that reads 'bang goes your afternoon'

Giles Coren

As my girlfriend bundled up her most urgent possessions, slipped over the obstacle course of empty bottles, cast a withering look at me, and slid out of the front door into the rain, I thought to myself, "why on earth doesn't the British Medical Association call for meaningful advice to be included on all bottles and cans of alcohol?"

Yesterday, thank God, it did. And while this latest nattyish press release from the doctors' trade union is probably too late to save my relationship, "meaningful advice" is clearly the way forward for future generations. Who, after all, pays any attention to that "can seriously damage your health" stuff? What my first bottle of cider — drunk on a family holiday when I was 12 — should have said on it was: "Seventeen years from now this stuff will have turned you into a

miserable git with a spare tyre and a solipsism problem which may jeopardise relations with the opposite sex". I am thinking of suing Woodpecker for the fact that there's no immediate likelihood of my starting a family.

This "meaningful advice" idea is truly the most sensible thing I have ever heard. Might I suggest that bottles of Grolsch carry the warning "May lead to your fancying a large doner with onions and extra chilli sauce later, but you'll be sorry in the morning". And think of the suffering that could be alleviated by lines like "More than three pints of Caffeys may cause delusions of sexual attractiveness", perhaps with the addendum that "even if you do get lucky, you'll only roll over and snore all night".

I am even now composing a letter to those Groucho trends who brought absinthe back on to

the cocktail lists of Britain's most fashionable bars. A suitable warning on the bottles would be "May cause you to think it is time to start a waspish cultural journal with absurdist cartoons".

Wine labels will be changed for ever, and not before time. Now when the sommelier brings the bottle, you will peruse it not to check that it is the Savigny-les-Beaune you ordered, but to verify the many ways in which it could kill you. "I think Sir will find this a cheeky little burgundy," the obsequious fellow will say, "but the chateau had an antifreeze problem some years back and there are rumours about how it got approved by the standards commission, so don't come running to me if you wake up feeling like you've been mugged." Perhaps special labels could be

kept in the cellar to be applied by staff at appropriate times. So that if you order a third bottle of rioja at lunch on a weekday, the waiter will tilt towards you a label that reads "Bang goes your afternoon".

Nor should it be only bona fide drunkards who are protected. Connoisseurs, too, can be saved from themselves. Every bottle of 47 Petrus, for example, should say "For the price you're paying for this, you could have bought a Volvo". Or "Think first, do you really want everyone in the kitchen laughing at you for spending £12,000 on a bottle of plonk? Can you bear the fuss the sommelier will make opening it, the way everybody will stare?" Then we can bring "meaningfulness" back to other warnings. I'm always baffled by those

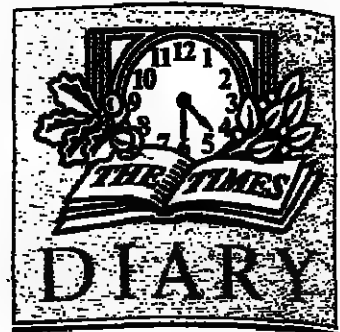
medicine bottles that say "Do not operate machinery". What machinery? This is 1999. Do they mean a laptop? An electric orange-squeezer? A Braun Independent 2000? Because, frankly, the chances of my suddenly getting an urge to operate a spinning jenny or a seed-drill while under the influence of Benilyn are pretty small. "Help," you can hear them cry, "he's got a steam-powered laundry press and he may be on antibiotics."

Not that we need antibiotics any more. Not now we have cereal. "A bowl of cereal could soon replace antibiotics as a cure for stomach upset," crowed a tabloid yesterday. Does this mean that on each packet of Frosties children should be warned "Stick to stated dose, always finish the course"? If cereal is not your game, give thanks for the humble tomato.

As Dr Stuttaford revealed in yesterday's paper, the anti-oxidant lycopene, responsible for the red colour in tomatoes, can protect you against cancer. Perhaps mobile phones, our latest carcinogenic addiction, could carry the proviso that calls should be made only while eating brightly coloured fruit. Smirnoff could run disclaimers insisting that its product be used only as an ingredient in Bloody Marys: "We accept no responsibility for health problems deriving from other uses."

But where, exactly, does the lycopene situation leave certain fruits that are not red — such as limes, quinces and lychees? I call upon the BMA to demand that they are all labelled with the harrowing reminder: "May not stop you getting cancer."

Philip Howard will return next week.



Word perfect

SALMAN RUSHDIE is teaching Mariella Frostrup to write. When the novelist (below right) heard that his friend, the television presenter (left), was thinking of taking up a creative writing course, he gallantly stepped in and insisted on instructing her himself.

Frostrup initially jumped at the chance of learning the finer points of prose-writing from the author of *Midnight's Children* and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, his latest novel based on a couple in a rock band. But the presenter, whose trademark is her gravelly voice, was quickly overawed.

"Salman handed me the first draft of *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*," says Frostrup. "After reading the first few pages I lost all faith in my own abilities. I had to keep wriggling out of lessons, like a kid who hasn't done her homework."



AFTER her histrionics at the Oscars, an apology of sorts from Gwyneth Paltrow: "I'm so sick of myself, my boring voice and my stupid soundbites."

P. D. JAMES is eclipsing Jeffrey Archer's popularity with the toughest audience in the world. Baroness James of Holland Park is beginning to prove a greater draw than Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare at dinners organised by local Conservative associations.

Her challenge for pole position on the rubber-chicken circuit can be put down to her discourse on crime-writing with a touch of politics, and Archer devoting more time to his mayoral ambitions.

"Her chats go down well with association members who don't like politics," I am told. "Jeffrey gets fewer invitations these days: he always makes the same jokes."

WHILE groupies adored him, Clint Eastwood's son Kyle (below) failed to impress the powers that be during his debut on the London Jazz scene this week. After his set at Pizza Express Jazz Club, the event's organiser tells me: "The show was full, but we don't know if that is because his father is Clint Eastwood or because he has some talent as a musician."



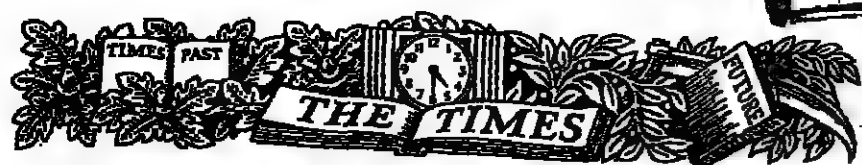
UNLIKE Tony Blair, Trevor Phillips knows how to act heroically. While the PM's attempt to portray himself as a good citizen in the seas off the Seychelles last January backfired when the "rescue" swimmer denied he had been in trouble, the TV presenter helped a driver in distress and kept quiet.

Phillips, a Labour mayoral candidate for London, pulled an injured woman from her car a fortnight ago after he saw her vehicle involved in a collision with a bus. Once he had calmed her down, he disappeared because "it's not always helpful having a recognisable face around in an emergency".

PHILIP GOULD, Tony Blair's adviser on how to market himself and his party, turns Labour supporters into Tories. Fraser Kemp, MP, tells how he was persuaded by the tactician to spend £7,500 on a focus group, two of whose members voted Labour. But after Gould's presentation, one switched sides.

LAURENCE MARKS and Maurice Gran, the comedy writers, are rustling up a television detective series to relaunch Rik Mayall's career. The comedian, who starred as Alan B'Stard in the pair's *New Statesman*, has been out of action since suffering a serious accident on a quad bike last April. By creating a detective who "cheats at cards", Marks and Gran hope to come up with an antidote to what they consider the blandness of the Inspector Morse genre.

EDWARD WELSH



THE LONG CAMPAIGN

Labour's lead in Scotland may not be as secure as it seems

It is, Alex Salmond said yesterday, "the most important election in Scotland's history". On that, at least, Tony Blair would appear to be in agreement. The Prime Minister used his first formal outing on the hustings to attack Mr Salmond and the SNP in vivid language. The voters of Scotland, by contrast, are not expressing quite the same level of enthusiasm for this contest. The campaign has been running continuously since the referendum result that endorsed a parliament with modest tax-raising powers over 18 months ago. It has existed in shadow form since devolution re-emerged as a central issue in Scottish life in the 1960s. Kosovo is, for the moment, overshadowing this battle.

The parties have done their best this week to rekindle passions. Policies have been showered on the Scots from all directions. Labour has put forward five "key pledges", the Conservatives seven, the SNP ten or 14 depending on the precise method of calculation, and the Liberal Democrats more than 20. The issues, although extremely worthy, have a certain familiarity. All four parties favour enhanced spending on the Scottish Health Service, several computers stuffed into every Scottish classroom, and dramatic new measures to deal with Scotland's drug crisis. All the opposition parties seem inclined to repeal higher education fees and abolish tolls on the bridge that links the Isle of Skye with the Scottish mainland.

The contest would be more dramatic if independence itself were the central question. Labour, not the SNP, has done its best to make the Union the defining issue. A remorseless assault on the economic costs of separation has allowed Labour to reassert its authority. Mr Salmond has been obliged to shift SNP strategy. His most prominent promise now is that the SNP would forgo next year's income tax cut and use that money for social expenditure.

This pledge is a transparent bid for the ballots of "old Labour" sympathisers, particularly those located in the West of Scotland. The SNP needs to expand its support beyond its traditional heartland in northeastern Scotland into Strathclyde if it is ever to acquire a parliamentary majority. There are, though, real risks for Mr Salmond in endorsing tax increases. This stand may be popular in Glasgow but may not play well in the northeast, which was relatively cool about tax-raising powers during the referendum campaign and are enjoying an economic renaissance.

There is little reason, though, for Labour to be complacent. The SNP is unlikely to convert urban Scotland *en masse* but Donald Dewar may have difficulties in persuading his natural supporters to visit the polling station. A low turnout would hurt Labour. The new voting arrangements will confuse some voters and may lead others to divide their loyalties between Labour in the constituency section and the SNP in the party list element. Mr Dewar may regret the day that he endorsed proportional representation.

This election may yet come to turn on personalities and the broader theme of Scottish identity. If so, it will move into Mr Salmond's strongest territory. The SNP leader is without doubt the most charismatic of the contenders for First Minister and will exploit patriotic sentiment. Mr Dewar cannot be expected to provide him with competition. Mr Blair is not widely loved in Scotland and there is a limit to the degree that Mr Brown can be presented as a surrogate Prime Minister. Given the likelihood of Scottish Liberal Democrats eventually gravitating to Labour after the election, the odds are still strongly in favour of Labour running the first Scottish executive. The struggle to be the largest single party in the parliament is, however, by no means settled.

NO TIME TO TRADE BLAME

Refugees risk becoming the fuse of a wider conflagration

Refugees do not willingly leave their last possessions lying in the mud, throw away identity papers and abandon scarce food half-eaten. The Macedonians' pell-mell evacuation of Blace, the wretched holding-point on the Kosovo-Macedonia border, has inflicted further misery on families who had already endured the unspeakable. It is hard to understand how this mass trans-shipment could have taken international monitors so totally by surprise that they still have not established where thousands of these people have been sent.

The huge fleet of buses that moved them cannot have been assembled without anybody noticing; and there were reasons to be alert. This was not the first instance — the snail-like conduct of border officials and the bundling of refugees on to planes to Turkey were others — of the Kosovan deportees being treated by Macedonian police and military more like cattle than like human beings in extremis.

But while every effort must be made to see that all Kosovo's fugitives are now registered and protected as well as fed and sheltered, to let recriminations inflame an already taut situation would be short-sighted and dangerous. Trading blame will not help the Kosovans; and for Nato, good working relations with the Macedonian Government are indispensable. However rough the Macedonian handling of Blace, that foetid encampment did urgently need emptying before it was swept by epidemics; and the authorities had been severely criticised for failing to act earlier.

It is anything but true, as the Macedonian Government asserts, that the country has had no Western help in handling the humanitarian crisis: Nato has set up huge tent cities, and ferried in 1,400 tons of supplies. But it is equally unfair not to recognise that Macedonia's conduct is partly ascribable to panic. A much larger and richer country would be overwhelmed

by the arrival on its borders, within days, of 130,000 destitute people. That is equivalent to 5.9 per cent of Macedonia's 2.2 million population. The same ratio, for Britain, would be 3.4 million refugees. In Macedonia, a melting-pot whose Slavic majority rubs shoulders with half a million Albanians, as well as ethnic Turks, Bulgarians and Romanians, the fear is that they will stay, destroying the tenuous accommodation which has brought Albanian parties into the governing coalition.

Not for nothing is Macedonia called "the powder-keg of the Balkans". Many in the Skopje elite, which has uncomfortably close links with Belgrade and is deeply suspicious of Albanian nationalist aspirations, have scant sympathy for the refugees. The best way to cope with this distasteful situation is to acknowledge that its Government is walking a tightrope. The West must demonstrate convincingly that it will receive both ample humanitarian aid and broader economic support to weather the disruptions of war — and above all to persuade it that its best prospect of seeing the refugees return to Kosovo is intensified co-operation with Nato. Mishandled, this crisis could prompt Skopje to throw in its lot with Belgrade, a course that would be disastrous for Macedonia, but also for the conduct of the war: Nato will need to use the Macedonian land routes into Kosovo.

Equally urgent is generous help for Montenegro, whose brave democratic Government is handling 60,000 refugees while being actively destabilised by Belgrade; and in miserably poor Albania, where one in ten is now a refugee — almost all of them Ghegs, in a land riven by clan rivalry between Ghegs and Tosks. Slobodan Milosevic's purposes will be well served if, by straining economies and ethnic tolerance, he can set off a chain of uncontrollable regional confrontations. He must at all costs be outflanked.

ASIAN ENTERPRISE

Energy and talent have turned refugees into millionaires

As newcomers to Britain, they huddled in wintry airports and temporary reception centres, penniless, shivering and shocked. But the 50,000 Asians expelled in 1972 from Uganda by its then President Idi Amin have turned that tale of woe into a dramatic success story. A list of the 200 richest Asians in Britain, published this week, shows that the bedraggled East African refugees of a quarter of a century ago are now, with the Chinese community, Britain's most high-flying ethnic minority.

The courage, talent and sheer hard work with which Ugandan and other Asian immigrants rebuilt their lives, in a country whose welcome was tempered with anxiety, have proved a blessing not only for the new millionaires themselves but for the British economy as a whole. Tens of thousands of jobs have been created by expanding Asian businesses, and more will follow. Asian enterprise, still concentrated in the traditional food, fashion and retailing sectors, is now moving into high-tech and hotel industries and the media. Increasing numbers of businesswomen are taking their place beside businessmen. The young are taking their place beside, or instead of, their parents; for first-generation entrepreneurs foster an

early knowledge of management in their children by training them in the businesses they found — then handing them on. The merit of Asian business strategies speaks for itself: the combined wealth of the list's entrepreneurs is more than £7 billion.

The energy that made millionaires of a few is fuelling a broader move towards integration and minority achievement in modern Britain. Non-white teenagers are now more likely than their white counterparts to stay at school after 16; the percentage of black and Asian Britons with degrees is higher than that of whites.

Such achievements are all the more remarkable in light of the racism still to be found in parts of British society, which continues to throw up obstacles for minorities. Black and Asian Britons are under-represented in the police, Whitehall and the upper echelons of the public sector. In a country now painfully trying, in the wake of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, to eradicate racial injustice, the economic success of Britain's irrepressible Asian millionaires serves not only as a mute reproach to the insular who once feared their immigration. It also offers fresh evidence of the benefits of working together to create a genuinely multicultural society.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Attitudes harden on both sides of Kosovo conflict

From Professor Timothy Williamson, FRS

Sir, Nato action has created solidarity between anti-authoritarian Serb intellectuals and the Milosevic Government. I have longstanding contacts with teachers of philosophy at Belgrade University, opponents of Milosevic until recently, in some cases at risk of their jobs, who now firmly support his refusal to give in to Nato demands.

They have no illusions about the military disparity and are prepared to endure bombing over the long haul. They know of Serb ethnic cleansing, but believe that withdrawal of all Yugoslav forces from Kosovo would lead to ethnic cleansing in the reverse direction, of ordinary Serbs by the KLA, a fear amply grounded in the army's past record (*Humanitarian Law Violations in Kosovo*, Human Rights Watch, New York, 1998). They have no confidence that a Nato peace-keeping force would prevent such results.

Escalating Nato violence hardens Serb resolve and undermines the prospects for moderate political forces in Belgrade, on whose development hopes for stability in the region depend. Is Nato making any serious attempt to provide a way for Serbia to back down without engaging in what educated Serbs would perceive as a betrayal of fellow-Serbs in Kosovo?

Nato leaders' well-meaning but counter-productive toughness is no substitute for a realistic long-term strategy.

Yours faithfully,
TIMOTHY WILLIAMSON
(Professor of Logic and Metaphysics,
University of Edinburgh),
32a Mansions Road,
Edinburgh EH9 2JD.
timothy.williamson@ed.ac.uk
April 7.

From Mrs Catherine Windels

Sir, Michael Binyon (report, April 3) writes about the strong public support in Europe for sending ground troops to Kosovo and the high level of concern over this course in the US.

I am sure most American readers of your paper have had their fill of articles pointing to American ignorance of the issues in Kosovo. In fact, Americans are fully aware of two key facts. First, the civil war in which we have so disastrously intervened is manifestly a local European conflict, of the sort our ancestors came to America to avoid; one in which

Americans have become enmeshed for reasons none of our leaders (or yours) can explain convincingly.

Second, the vast majority of the ground troops Nato would supply would be American soldiers, such as the three young men paraded on Serb television.

Ignorant though some of us may be of the murky details of Balkan history, Americans have more than enough information to justify opposition to intensifying American involvement in this.

Sincerely,
CATHERINE WINDELS,
155 Garth Road,
Scarsdale, New York 10583.
catherine54@nyc.rr.com
April 3.

From Mr K. R. H. Allen

Sir, It should be a matter of principle that if reporters based in Yugoslavia are not allowed to visit sites of supposed atrocities in Kosovo, they should remain silent when taken to places where Nato's bombing campaign has, very regrettably, resulted in the death or wounding of civilians.

Instead, we see on television Serbs taunting Nato with cowardice for unwillingness to fight them on the ground. This is nauseating when some Serbs believe it is legitimate to despoil, rape and murder defenceless Kosovo civilians.

I believe Nato servicemen deserve better understanding from the media.

Yours faithfully,
RODNEY ALLEN,
23 Pembroke Gardens Close,
Edwards Square, W8 6HR,
April 8.

From the Ambassador of Poland

Sir, I was surprised by your report (April 3) alleging that Poland feels reassured because Nato is showing its defiance of Moscow by conducting air raids in the former Yugoslavia, and that we support this operation not least because of the opposition to it from the Russian Federation.

First, let me stress that Poland's will to accede to the Alliance had nothing to do with a threat from any specific country — there were plenty of well known reasons upon which, I think, it is not necessary to dwell here again.

Second, it seems to be obvious that the reason for the operation in the former Yugoslavia is Nato's will to stop a humanitarian disaster in Kosovo. Nato's current armed operations offer the best avenue of coercing

President Milosevic into returning to the path of negotiations and respect for human rights. Poland very much counts on the Russian co-operation in this respect.

Sincerely yours,
R. STEMPLOWSKI,
47 Portland Place, WIN 4JH,
April 6.

From Sir Henry McDowell

Sir, Are we fighting a previous war? We seem to be assuming that Milosevic, following precedent, might ultimately seek to maintain his policies against international opposition by turning to the use of his guns, tanks and warplanes. His military power must therefore be reduced as our first priority.

But he has devised a cruel alternative to armed warfare, which has so far made the use of his military strength quite unnecessary. To secure his policies and position, he has loaded countries opposing those policies with an almost intractable burden of caring for refugees.

What should be the defensive strategy to "warfare" waged in this way?

Yours sincerely,
HENRY McDOWELL,
128 Court Lane, SE21 7EA,
April 6.

From Mr John Pedler

Sir, The best way to demonstrate that the Kosovars shall return to their country is for the European countries of Nato to pledge contributions to a fund ample to restore every home destroyed by the Serbs. That not only would give concrete hope to the Kosovar refugees, and credible reassurance to their hosts that their stay will be limited — but would infect the Serbs with a sense of futility.

The West should not show in Kosovo the same disregard for the politico-military potential of aid that those of us involved found in Bosnia. Most Serbs in Serbia, as in Bosnia, want a share in European prosperity and an end to their hated pariah status. Were the Europeans to offer that alternative, which cannot come without a change of leadership, they would be shooting at Milosevic's Achilles' heel. Where the stick is short, a carrot is needed.

Yours truly,
JOHN PEDLER,
J. P. Diplomatic Consultancy,
A. Stanger 16, Volosko 51410,
Opatija, Croatia,
April 8.

der may have been anything other than a purely racially motivated crime was, apparently, evidence of unwitting racism.

There appears to be no acknowledgement in the interview of the incompetence that led to the publication of informants' names and addresses in Sir William's report, yet he has castigated officers for their mistakes. But then neither he nor his panel is subject to complaint, investigation and, perhaps, punishment under a disciplinary code.

We hope that the legacy of Stephen Lawrence is a better, more tolerant and responsible society. The police officers of London are ready, willing and able to meet the challenges. In return they expect fairness and balance.

Yours etc,
GLEN SMYTH
Chairman,
Metropolitan Police Federation
Joint Executive Committee,
Harold Scott House,
1 Birchfield Street,
Limehouse, E14 8EX,
April 1.

coming cities simply because they lacked the appropriate links with the Church of England.

Belfast applied in conjunction with Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. After much discussion in the Home Office a charter was granted in 1888. Other towns followed: Birmingham in 1889, Leeds and Sheffield in 1893; Nottingham, Bradford and Hull at the time of the Diamond Jubilee in 1897. None had an Anglican cathedral at the time.

Subsequent grants have usually (but not invariably) been made in conjunction with important royal occasions.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN BECKETT,
Department of History,
University of Nottingham,
University Park,
Nottingham NG7 2RD,
April 6.

seen by the current chief executive of ITV who, in another Snoddy article on the same page, is cited as a candidate for the BBC Director-General's job. It is to be hoped that those making the selection both read Mr Snoddy and watch ITV.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN CLARK,
48 Albany Park Road,
Kingston upon Thames,
Surrey KT2 5SU,
April 7.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Business basis for eurosceptic stance

From Mr Colin Bullen

Sir, The assertions by Labour MPs Giles Radice and Bill Rammell (letter, April 7) concerning the business view of EMU are unsustainable. The Institute of Directors have made clear their very grave doubts over the single currency while the Federation of Small Businesses have twice voted at their AGM to withdraw from the EU altogether.

The reality is that only about 15 per cent of business activity has any connection with the EU, the rest being either confined within the UK or relating to the wide world outside Europe. Is it sensible that, in order to satisfy the demands of a few multinational companies, we should sacrifice both our political independence and accountable system of government, by tying ourselves irrevocably to an organisation with which we have had an adverse trade balance for decades and which is afflicted both with institutional corruption and an inefficient economic structure?

Yours faithfully,
C. R. BULLEN
(Member, NEC, Campaign for an Independent Britain),
119 Douglas Road,
Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2UE.

From Mr R. Lathey

Sir, Giles Radice and Bill Rammell declare that "the base of British euroscepticism is rooted in confusion and misinformation".

On the contrary, the basis of British euroscepticism is rooted in the clear knowledge that the country is being led — regardless of the views of the electorate — into a European super-state, and that the single currency is merely the next step in that direction.

The confusion and misinformation rest with those who are unable to accept this or, worse, accept it but seek to camouflage the true agenda.

Yours faithfully,
R. LATHEY,
7 Trafalgar Court,
Woodlands Avenue, Rustington,
West Sussex BN16 3ES,
April 7.

Museum's Great Court

From Professor Emeritus Luke Herrmann

Sir, In your article and leader on the British Museum Great Court development (April 5; see also letter, same day) you infer criticism of the museum's keepers for putting the storage and display of their collections before the integrity of the great building that houses them.

My *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* defines a museum as "a building used for storing and exhibiting objects of historical, scientific or cultural interest". In modern times architects and their patrons have often ignored this — Berlin's new Jewish Museum and the proposed V&A extension, for instance — and remarkable feats of architecture have come before practicality.

Keepers at the British Museum must continue to put their collections first. It is good to have "a great new public plaza for London" on the premises as an added attraction to draw in visitors, but they must not be diverted from the galleries, and these must not be overshadowed, as in their present state many will be, by the plaza.

Let us hope that the strengthened management of the British Museum (report, April 1) will immediately find equal resources to help the keepers in their primary task.

Yours faithfully,
LUKE HERRMANN,
The Coombes, Sibbertoft,
Market Harborough LE16 9TZ,
April 5.

Hysteria lecture

From Dr Helen King

Sir, Dr Gardner-Thorpe (letter, April 1) correctly identifies the colour illustration to your feature on female circumcision (Weekend, March 27) as Jean-Martin Charcot's demonstration of hysteria at the Salpêtrière.

But the patient — probably Blanche Wittman, the "Queen of Hysterics" — may have learnt her moves from something omitted from the reproduction you used: a drawing of one of the stages of hysteria, displayed at the back of the lecture room. This was by Paul Richer, who can be seen in your illustration next to Charcot capturing Blanche's swoon.

Like our own chat-show guests, Blanche may have dutifully supplied what her audience wanted to see.

Yours faithfully,
HELEN KING,
Departments of Classics and History,
The University of Reading,
Whiteknights,
PO Box 218, Reading RG6 6AA.

So that's all right

From Mr Nicholas Wibberley

Sir, I have to hand a plastic bottle which bears the legend "Carbonated spring water. Suitable for vegetarians."

Yours etc,
NICHOLAS WIBBERLEY,
East Whiddon, Landkey Road,
Barnstaple, Devon EX32 9LA,
April 8.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr E.S.S. Bedell and Miss C.J.A. Tracy
The engagement is announced between Edward, son of Mr and Mrs Jack Bedell, of Bishops Cleeve, Shropshire, and Caroline, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Ralph Tracy, of Evesham, Worcestershire.

Mr D.G. Bradley and Miss M. McL. Dougal
The engagement is announced between Damian, son of Mr and Mrs John Bradley, of Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, and Margaret, daughter of Mr and Mrs John Dougal, of Cophorne, West Sussex.

Mr G. Capilupo and Miss L.J. Pollington
The engagement is announced between Gerardo, elder son of Signora Giulia Capilupo and the late Signora Raffaello Capilupo, of Cosenza, Italy, and Louise, twin daughter of Mr and Mrs Anthony Pollington, of Frant, Sussex.

Captain Z.N. Catsaras, L.G. and Miss N.N. Landell-Mills
The engagement is announced between Captain Zahir Nicholas Catsaras, The Life Guards, elder son of Mr and Mrs Nicholas Catsaras, of Ashurst, Surrey, and Natasha, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Pierre Landell-Mills, of Washington, D.C.

Mr M.J.L. Chawner and Miss G.J.P. Hare
The engagement is announced between Matthew, elder son of Mr and Mrs John Chawner, of Epsom, Surrey, and Philippa, only daughter of Mrs Tilly Hare, of Canton Pyon, Hereford, and the late Mr Richard Hare.

Mr P.E.H. Davies and Miss L.E. Palmer
The engagement is announced between Edward, eldest son of Mr and Mrs John Hamilton Davies, of Bardfield Saling, Essex, and Lucy, daughter of Mr and Mrs Ross Palmer, of Melbourne, Australia. The marriage will take place in Melbourne, on January 8, 2000, followed by a blessing and reception in England next spring.

Mr J.R. Plunkett-Erle-Drax and Miss N.M.S. Bogard
The engagement is announced between Jeremy Ryan, second son of Mr and the Hon Mrs Henry Walker Plunkett-Erle-Drax, of Charborough Park, Weymouth, Dorset, and Natasha Michelle Sarah, second daughter of Mr and Mrs Harvey Philip Bogard, of Carlton Hill, London.

Mr R.Gamba and Miss S.J. Bardwell
The engagement is announced between Ruman, son of Mr and Mrs Paul Gamba, of Cranborne, Dorset, and Sarah, daughter of Mr and Mrs George Bardwell, of Darley, North Yorkshire.

Mr H.P.B. Martin and Miss L.E. Roberts
The engagement is announced between Hugh, eldest son of Mr and Mrs John Martin, of Stoke Newington, London, and Lucy, only daughter of John Roberts, of Lyford Cay, Bahamas, and Mrs Carole Roberts, of Owmby by Spital, Lincolnshire.

Mr N.J. Jeffers and Miss G.E. Burton
The engagement is announced between Neil, son of Air Commodore and Mrs Peter R. Jeffers, of Northwood, Middlesex, and Georgina, daughter of Mr and Mrs Jonathan Burton, of Endisham Road, London.

Mr S.M. Joyner and Miss A.K. Foley
The engagement is announced between Simon, son of Dr and Mrs Miles Joyner, of Hucham, Devon, and Amelia, daughter of Mr and Mrs James Foley, of Colton, North Devon.

Mr M.J. Keller and Miss T.E. Sherriff
The engagement is announced between Matthew, son of Mrs Pa Keller and the late Mr Charles Keller, of Sandgate, Kent, and Tiffany, daughter of Mr and Mrs Vernon Sherriff, of Welwyn, Hertfordshire.

Mr E.H.T. Law and Miss L.N. Hine
The engagement is announced between Edward, son of the Hon Cecil and Mrs Law, of Broad Campden, Gloucestershire, and Lucy, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Henry Hine, of Advent, North Cumbria.

Mr P.G. Law and Miss A.J. Vacher
The engagement is announced between Patrick, eldest son of Mr and Mrs G.A. Law, and Amanda, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs P.J.S. Vacher.

Mr P.W. Makin and Miss E.J. Duffin
The engagement is announced between Patrick, son of Mr and Mrs Rudney Makin, of Barnes, and Emma, daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael Duffin, of Barnes.

Mr P.H. McKee and Miss N. Kopelowitz
The engagement is announced between Paul, son of Sylvia and Herbert McKee, of Epsom, Surrey, and Natasha, daughter of Arnold and the late Anne Catherine Kopelowitz, of Mill Hill, Middlesex.

Mr S. Scott Elliot and Miss M. Bonney
The engagement is announced between Simon, younger son of Lieutenant Colonel A. Scott Elliot, of Thornhill, Stirling, and Mrs A. Duffin, of County Down, and Michelle, daughter of Mr and Mrs S. Bonney, of Harare, Zimbabwe.

Mr H.D. Stogdon and Miss M.A.T. Miles
The engagement is announced between Henry, son of Mr and Mrs David Stogdon, of Wychington, Dorset, and Anna, daughter of Mr and Mrs Christopher Miles, of Bletchley, Surrey.

Captain B.S. Stokes and Francis S. Freise
The engagement is announced between Benjamin, son of Mr and Mrs H.C. Stokes, of Dyrham, Wiltshire, and Sascha, daughter of Herr and Frau Basso Freise, of Detmold, Germany.

Mr J.E. Tower and Mrs A.M. Crowther
The engagement is announced between John, son of Mr Francis Towers, of Chipping Campden, and Mrs Kathleen Blinckhorn, of Lymn, Cheshire, and Alison, daughter of Dr and Mrs Andrew Crowther, of Tewkesbury.



The Mayor of Doncaster, Councillor Yvonne Woodcock, in costume to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Mansion House, the South Yorkshire town's most historic building. It will be open to the public all next week, with the Mayor and her footmen dressed for the part

University news

Cambridge
Downing College
The following have been elected Honorary Fellows of Downing College Cambridge:

Professor Colin Blackmore, FRS, Wavell Professor of Physiology in the University of Oxford.
Professor Alan Carrington, FRK, Royal Society Research Professor in the University of Southampton.
Professor Richard Gregory, FRK, Emeritus Professor of Neurophysiology in the University of Bristol.
Professor Martin Kemp, FBA, Professor of History of Art in the University of Oxford.
Sir Arthur Watts, KCMG, QC, formerly Legal Adviser to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

London
Knight Holloway College
New Deans

Professor Denis Cosgrove, BA (Oxon), MA (Toronto), DPPhil (Oxon), Geography, Dean of the Graduate School from October 1, 1998 to September 30, 2001.
Dr Peter Dewar, BA (Exeter), PhD (Reading), History, Dean of the Faculty of History and Social Sciences.

Professor Chris Currey, MA (Cambridge), PhD (Cambridge), Classics, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Music.
Dr David Shephard, MA, PhD (Cambridge), Dean of Admissions Promotions.

Dr David Denney, BSc (Warwick), MA, CQSW, PGCE, PhD (Kent) to Reader in Social and Public Policy.

Mr John le Neve Johnson

A service of thanksgiving for the life of John le Neve Johnson (Johnnie) will be held at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London, EC4, on Thursday, April 22, at noon.

Church news

The Rev Robert Marsden, Chaplain, Fettes College (Edinburgh) to be Minister, Buxton (Trinity Chapel) Proprietary Chapel (Derby).
The Rev Edward Marsden, Vicar, Churchdown St Bartholomew and St Andrew, Gloucestershire, to be also Rural Dean of Gloucester North.

Appointment

Mr Peter Harborne to be High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago in succession to Mr Gregory Faulkner who moves to a new Diplomatic Service appointment.

Roman window-pane factory tracked down at York

By NORMAN HAMMOND, ARCHAEOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

A RARE Roman glass factory has been identified in York, the ancient Eboracum and one of the principal cities in the Empire's northernmost province. Although thousands of Roman glass vessels and numerous fragments of window-glass are known, this is the first manufactory whose location can be pinpointed.

Evidence for the factory was excavated 20 years ago, during investigation of the Coppergate site now occupied by the Jorvik Viking Centre, but has only recently been recognised.

More than 180 pottery sherds with melted glass adhering to them were identified as manufacturing debris, because some of the glass was incompletely fused.

This "semi-fused batch material" was found redeposited in Viking levels of the famous "Coppergate Dig" site, and was initially thought to be of Viking date, but detailed scrutiny of the stratigraphic records for the site showed that a small but important amount of both the glass-melting pots and the batch material was securely stratified in Roman layers.

"This strongly suggested that glassmaking took place during the Roman period, and was confirmed when the pots were identified as 'Ebor ware', the local coarse pottery made between about AD 71 and 250," says Caroline Jackson and her colleagues in the *Journal of Glass Studies*.

The Coppergate area of the Roman city had other light industries as well, including potteries, and clay close to the riverbank, where products could be shipped.

The pots may have been made close by, but they were also chosen because they could withstand temperatures of 1,150°C without losing their shape. "This quality explains why the local domestic pottery could be used to melt glass, and why there was no need for any specialised industrial facilities," the investigators say.

The presence of tridymite and cristobalite, inversions of quartz that form at 867 and 1,250 degrees respectively, show that the raw materials had been heated almost to the latter temperature, but not for long.

"At these temperatures there can be no doubt that the aim was to produce glass, even if, in this case, the effort was not a success," they say.

Glassmaking in antiquity is often claimed to have been a two-stage process, with the raw materials fused around 700-850 degrees to form a "frit", which removed impurities the frit was then ground to powder and melted above 1,000 degrees to make glass. The York evidence suggests that a single-stage process may have been used instead, something which experiment has shown to be feasible.

The chemical composition of the York glass was slightly different from the Roman imperial standard, with a higher level of potassium that may have been due to the presence of plant ash. It was not contamination from the crucibles, and these were in fact carefully chosen for their buff colour and lack of iron, which if it had melted into the glass would have imparted a distinctive blue-green tinge. The York glass was clear to

light green, and may well have been intended for making window-panes rather than containers. The molten glass would have been cast in moulds, leaving no characteristic waste products.

"There would have been a great demand for window glass at the time," the investigators say. "Not only were parts of the fortress being rebuilt, but there was also much building activity in the civilian settlement - this was a rapidly growing town which became the provincial capital of northern Britain."

The main glassmaking centres of the Roman Empire were in Egypt and Judaea, where raw materials were abundant, but too bulky and caustic to ship easily. Alexandrian glass was the more expensive. This limited manufacture of raw glass might account for the uniform chemical composition of vessels, wherever they were blown.

Window-glass was cheaper than blown cups and vases, according to Roman price edicts, which would make shipping less profitable and local manufacture more tempting.

The slightly different composition of the York glass suggests a degree of experimentation, but more studies which discriminate between the two kinds of glass are needed, as are more directed investigations of the industrial process itself. "After all, this is probably the only glass in the Roman Empire whose place of manufacture can be exactly pinpointed," the investigators note.

Source: *Journal of Glass Studies* 40: 55-61.

Birthdays today

Mr Severiano Ballesteros, golfer, 42. Lord Justice Simon Brown, 62. Sir Brian Colville, former civil servant, 71. Lord Darro, 88. Mr G.H. Edwards, Rector, Morris's Academy, Perthshire, 41. The Most Rev Domenico Enrie, former Apostolic Nuncio, 90. Mr Robson Fisher, former Headmaster, Brynston School, 78. Lord Sir Brian Colville, former civil servant, 71. Lord Darro, 88. Miss Hannah Gordon, actress, 58. Sir Hew Hamilton-Dalrymple, Lord-Lieutenant of East Lothian, 73. Mr Roger Harrison, chairman, Towns Hall, 64. Sir Graham Hills, former Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Strathclyde University, 73. Mr Tom Jackson, trade unionist, 74. Mr Neil Jenkins, actor, 54. Mr Alan Knott, former cricketer, 53. Mr Tom Lehrer, lecturer and songwriter, 71. Mr Martin Margiela, fashion designer, 43. Professor Basil Mitchell, FBA, philosopher of religion, 82. Mr Peter Moore, former chairman, Littlewoods Organisation, 67. Dr Vincent O'Brien, racehorse trainer, 82. Sir Michael Ogden, QC, 73. Sir Michael Palliser, former Head of the Diplomatic Service, 77. Sir Michael Richardson, former chairman, Smith New Court, 74. Professor K.G. Robbins, Senior Vice-Chancellor, University of Wales, 59. Mr Martin Rogers, former Chief Master, King Edward's School, Birmingham, 68. Miss Valerie Singleton, broadcaster, 62. Mr Michael Somers, CH, first Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, 63. Professor D.M. Walker, QC, FBA, 79. Mr B.H. Weston, former chairman, Manweb, 69. Sir Richard Young, industrialist, 85.

Latest wills

Sir David Lane, of Great Shelford, Cambridge, left estate valued at £1,027,465 net. He left £5,000 each to Christian Aid, Save the Children Fund, Voluntary Service Overseas and Youth Clubs UK.
Mr Alfred Gordon Askew of Wingfield, Diss, Norfolk, left estate valued at £1,307,155 net.
Mrs Enid Isaacs, of Sheffield, South Yorkshire, left estate valued at £1,148,699 net.
Mr Jacob King, of East Bergholt, Ipswich, Suffolk, left estate valued at £1,019,817 net.
Mrs Irene Mary Lawton, of Walford, Hertfordshire, left estate valued at £1,304,307 net.
Mr Edward Carson Lister, of Colchester, Essex, left estate valued at £1,474,478 net.
Joanna Helena Newfield, of London W1, left estate valued at £1,335,791 net.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, illegitimate son of King Charles II, Rotterdam, 1649; Isambard Kingdom Brunel, engineer, Portsmouth, 1806; Charles Baudelaire, poet, Paris, 1831; Leon Blum, Prime Minister of France 1936-37 and 1938; Paul Robeson, singer and actor, Princeton, New Jersey, 1898; Hugh Gaitskell, leader of the Labour Party 1955-63, London, 1906; Sir Robert Helpmann, ballet dancer and choreographer, Mount Gambier, South Australia, 1909.
DEATHS: King Edward IV, reigned 1461-70 and 1471-83, London, 1483; Lorenzo de Medici (The Magnificent), Careggi, Italy, 1492; François Rabelais, writer and physician, Baugy, 1553; Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor 1618-21, London, 1626; Danie Gabriel Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelite poet and painter, Birchington-on-Sea, Kent, 1882; Mrs Patrick Campbell, actress, Pau, France, 1948; Dr C.E.M. Joad, civil servant, author, and controversialist, Hampstead, 1953; Frank Lloyd Wright, architect, Phoenix, Arizona, 1959; General Robert E. Lee, captured to General Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, 1865. The Hudson Bay Company ceded its territory to Canada, 1869. Germany invaded Denmark and Norway, 1940.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

BIRTHS

ALLMEY - On 5th April 1999, to Vicki Marie (nee Gault) and William, the gift of a daughter, Bethlyn Victoria-Anne.

BHOAG - On 7th April, at the East Shore Hospital, Singapore, to Parmjeet Kaur (nee Munday) and Satnam Singh, a beautiful baby, Kieran Singh. Sibs son, grandson to Mr & Mrs Prithvi S. Bhog (Chelmsford) and Mr & Mrs Prithvi S. Munday (Leamington).

BRAMBLE - On 4th April at Kingston Hospital, to Natasha (nee Melkiet) and Ian, a son, Max Henry, a brother for Dominic and Gabriella.

BRIGGS - On April 3rd, to Daniel (nee Ziegler) and Anabel, a daughter, Honor Johanna, a sister for Hal, William and Arthur.

CARR-JONES - On 31st March 1999, to Zoe (nee Tomkins) and Charles, a daughter, Jemima Anna Mary.

DAUBENY - On April 5th in Tunbridge Wells, to Clare (nee Black) and Giles, a beautiful daughter, Jessica Jane.

KELLER - On 25th March 1999, to Louise (nee Symons) and Philip, a daughter, Lauren Trudy, a sister for Gabriel.

KHALIL-ROBINSON - On April 2nd, to Nagema (nee Khaliq) and Andrew Brown, a daughter, Hannah Rose.

DEATHS

LACKNER - On April 5th at the Portland Hospital, to Frederick (nee Mead) and Den, a daughter, Sophia, sister to Philip, Gregory and Ana. Thanks and praise.

LINDSAY - On March 19th at the Portland Hospital, to Lucy (nee Davenport) and Lindsey, a brother for Simon, a brother for Merin.

MACCORMICK - On March 19th 1999 to Alison and Guy, a daughter, Catherine Sarah.

PETERSON - On April 5th at the Portland Hospital, to Karen and Scott, a daughter, Olivia Bay.

POWELL - On 1st April to Linda Shouter and David, a beautiful daughter, Alice Olivia.

RAMMER - On March 23rd at the Portland Hospital, to Lemile Decker and Stephen, a daughter, Josephine, a sister for James.

ANNIVERSARIES

MARSHALL - To Jennifer Elizabeth on our first of many anniversaries. Thank you, just for being you. All my love, Christopher.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

DOYLE-REUCKER - On 9th April 1949 at Holy Trinity Brompton, London SW7, Gavin to Judy.

BIRTHS

ASHWORTH - Ann, widow of John Ashworth, Dean of York, died peacefully at Colchester Crematorium 11 am 16th April 1999.

BELL - Richard Warwick MBBS, LRCP, MRCS, formerly of Nottingham City, died peacefully on Tuesday 3rd April 1999. A darling husband to Raissa and the most loving father. A unique man who gave selflessly to all he knew. Funeral at 1 pm on Thursday 15th April 1999 at St Francis of Assisi, Pottery Lane, Nottingham Hill Gate, W11. Enquiries to Chelsea Funeral Directors, 2805 Fulham Road, SW10.

CLARK - On April 4th 1999, peacefully at Exeter, Ronald Ernest Clark, 87, of Minster Road, Exeter, died peacefully at home. He was the late Gwyneth, daughter of Roger, Hill and Graham, and much loved by his eight grandchildren. Funeral Service at Aldershot Crematorium, on Tuesday 13th April at 2.30 pm. Family flowers only please. Donations for either Amnesty International or Cystic Fibrosis Trust c/o Thomas Leggett, Petersfield Road, Whitehill, Bordon, GU35 5AR.

CRAWFORD - Colin William died peacefully at home on April 7th 1999, much loved husband of Diana, James and Hugo. Private family cremation, a service of thanksgiving will be announced later. Enquiries C.J. Williams tel: 01825 505833.

DALGLEISH - Jamie suddenly in hospital on 7th April. Adored Husband of Jane and loving Father of Martin and Richard and a much loved Father-in-law and Grandfather. At the request of the family a private funeral service will be held. A memorial service to be arranged at a later date. Family flowers only. Donations to the RNLI. Donations and enquiries to Green Willow Funerals, 13 St. Ives Road, Heath, Cardiff, 01222 462100.

DUNHAM - Anthony H.M. of Brentwood, Essex, passed away peacefully at home on 1st April 1999 aged 69 years. Funeral service to take place at South Essex Crematorium, Upminster at 12.30 pm on Wednesday 14th April. Family flowers only please. Donations if desired to The British Heart Foundation and sent c/o Bennett's (Brentwood) Ltd, 130 High Street, Brentwood CM14 4AS.

DEATHS

DOUGLAS - Mabel Josephine passed away at home on Sunday 4th April aged 82 years. She will be sadly missed by her family, friends and all colleagues at Rank Organisation. Miss Douglas will be taken into St Columba's R.C. Church on Monday 12th April at 5pm, followed by a Requiem Mass on Tuesday 13th April at 9.15 am. Then interment at Blacon Cemetery, Chester. Family flowers only please. All enquiries to Dalton and Hallmark, 80 Poulton Street, Hoole, Chester, tel: 01244 310968.

DUGGAN - Charles aged 77 years. Died after a short illness on Monday Thursday, 1st April 1999. Deeply beloved husband of Anne, much loved brother of Mortimer (deceased), Margaret (deceased), U.S.A., John, Gladys (deceased), Patrick and Joseph. Requiem mass, 11 am Thursday 15th April at St James's Church, Pope's Grove, Twickenham. Thence to Teddington Cemetery, Slough. Family flowers only. Enquiries to Andrew Holmes and Son 0187 572 3277.

LEITH-BUCHANAN - At home on 8th April 1999 Barbara Dore, widow of Sir George Leith-Buchanan Bart., in her 96th year. Service of Thanksgiving at St Mungo's Episcopal Church, Alexandria on Monday 12th April at 11.30 am to which all friends and neighbours are respectfully invited. The funeral cremation private.

KENTFIELD - B.E. (Betty), very dear sister of Mabel and Fred, died peacefully at the Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead on April 4th. Cremation Golden Green Crematorium on 15th April at 2.15 pm.

LYTHE - Peacefully after a short illness in Kings Cross Hospital, Dundee on Wednesday April 7th 1999. Joan of Broughty Ferry, Dundee. Beloved wife of the late Professor Edgar Lythe and a dear mother of Charlotte. Funeral service on Wednesday April 14th in The University Chaplaincy, Cross Row, Dundee at 11.30 am, thereafter in Dundee Crematorium at 12.30 pm. All friends respectfully invited. Family flowers only please.

DEATHS

GILSON-SCHEN - Regina on April 7th 1999 aged 90 peacefully at her home in Highbury. Deeply loved mother of Clive and the late Sandra, devoted grandmother of Sarah, Miriam and David and dear friend of her daughter-in-law Penny. We all loved her very much. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends. Funeral at Golden Green Crematorium on Tuesday April 13th at 12 noon. Enquiries to Lovetree & Sons Ltd, tel: (0181) 444-5753.

LLOYD - Anne suddenly but peacefully in Kings Cross Hospital, Dundee on Wednesday April 7th 1999. Joan of Broughty Ferry, Dundee. Beloved wife of the late Professor Edgar Lythe and a dear mother of Charlotte. Funeral service on Wednesday April 14th in The University Chaplaincy, Cross Row, Dundee at 11.30 am, thereafter in Dundee Crematorium at 12.30 pm. All friends respectfully invited. Family flowers only please.

MIDDLETON - Ronald George D.S.C., died on 31st March 1999 peacefully at home in London aged 85. Widower of deeply loved Sybil Middleton (nee Bland). Much loved husband of Sumner (deceased) who died in 1976, uncle of David Sumner and great-uncle of Emily. A service of thanksgiving will be held on Tuesday 27th April at 12 noon at St Botolph without Aldersgate London EC1. No flowers please but donations if desired to Staying Put, Anchor Trust, Fountain Court, Oxford, Spire Business Park, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 1NZ.

PATON - On April 6th at Chapel Amble Major James Richard Paton, The Kings Own Royal Border Regiment. Husband of Patricia (deceased). Funeral private.

PHILLIPS - At The County Hospital Lincoln, on April 3rd 1999 Allan David Morgan aged 73 years. Much loved husband of Mona, loving father of Joanna and David and grandfather of Claire. Funeral Service at St Thomas Chapel of Ease, Hougham on Wednesday 14th April at 1.45 pm followed by cremation at Lincoln Crematorium at 2.30 pm. Donations if wished to St Barnabas Hospice, Lincoln. Enquiries tel: 01522 520805.

POTTER - Edith, widow of the late Charles Potter, died on 27th March at the age of 94 years. Loved mother of Anthea, Janet, Timothy and Miranda. Funeral to be held at 11 am on 15th April at St Michael's Church, Lower Macclesfield, Cheshire. Donations to St Michael's V.S. Milton Hill House, Milton Hill, Abingdon. On behalf of The National Trust, Membership Department, PO Box 38, Bromley, Kent. Enquiries tel: B1 & E. Piper (01223) 862258.

ROSBOTTOM - Lorna G died tragically in a car crash on Thursday 1st April aged 84. A genealogist and local historian who did much for her local community of Tintinhull, Somerset. She was a generous spirit who was much loved and respected by family and friends. The funeral is to be held on Thursday 15th April at 2.30 pm at St Margaret's Church, Tintinhull, Somerset. No flowers please but donations in lieu to be made to Tintinhull Village Millennium Fund c/o David Rivers Funeral Director, 20 Lyde Road, Tintinhull, Somerset, tel: 01935 433737.

SIMPSON-BRASS - On April 7th aged 77 years Dr Alfred McKillop (Mac) Simpson-Brass of 100, New York, New York. Loving husband of Elizabeth.

To place death notices, acknowledgements or notices please call 0171 680 6880

0171 680 6880

A Reuter telegram, dated New York, April 8, states:

The circumstances of the recovery of Gainsborough's lost *Duchess* are as follows: Detective William Pinkerton was in conversation with Pat Sheedy when the latter related the manner in which he had been able to find the picture. Sheedy had been in London for years, and mentioned the name of the man to whom he had been indebted. At this point Pinkerton exclaimed: "That is the man who stole the *Gainsborough*." Sheedy immediately volunteered to secure the return of the picture if proper arrangements could be made. Sheedy said his friend had been in New Zealand and was now working honestly in England. He was the father of children who were nearly grown up and were ignorant of their father's offence. Sheedy first exacted a promise from Pinkerton that no attempt should be made to discover the identity of his friend while Sheedy was opening the negotiations. He then went to England and found that his friend was more than willing to permit the return of the picture.

Catania
back at
their best

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BUSINESS • ARTS • MEDIA • SPORT • TELEVISION

THE TIMES



Oliver
and the
X-rays
Arts, page 34

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY APRIL 9 1999

Euroland's bold half-point cut catches out financial markets

Bank and ECB reduce rates

EUROPEAN markets yesterday received a double boost as both the European Central Bank and the Bank of England decided to cut their respective interest rates.

While the Bank of England's decision to reduce base rates by a further quarter point to 5.25 per cent had been widely expected, the ECB's half-point cut took the markets by complete surprise.

It was the first time that the ECB has used its powers to alter rates, reducing its key refinancing rate from 3 per cent to 2.5 per cent. The Swiss

National Bank also decided to remain in step with the ECB, cutting its discount rate from 1 to 0.5 per cent, its lowest ever.

Although the ECB has been under heavy political pressure to trim rates almost since the single currency was launched on January 1, the ECB had until recently seemed set against any reduction in rates.

Wim Duisenberg, President of the ECB, yesterday insisted that the decision to cut rates did not represent a change in policy and had won the backing of a "large majority" on the ECB's 17-strong governing

council. "The decision taken today keeps monetary policy on a longer-term stability-oriented course and, by doing so, contributes to creating an economic environment in which the considerable growth potential of the euro area could be exploited," Mr Duisenberg said shortly after the decision.

However, he added that the ECB had chosen to make a larger than expected cut in rates because it wanted to end market expectations of a further cut. "I would like to be sure that it is," he said, rejecting claims that the Bank had refrained from

making an earlier cut in rates because of concerns about the value of the euro, which has depreciated by as much as 10 per cent against the dollar during its brief lifespan.

"We are not at all dissatisfied with the level of the euro," Mr Duisenberg said.

The half-point cut came too late to boost equity markets but sent the euro higher on foreign exchanges at once. It jumped to \$1.088 at one stage but failed to hold its gains, quickly slipping back towards \$1.078, only marginally above the day's lows. Traders, however, said that the

rate cut could improve the euro's short-term outlook as it would boost confidence in the European economy.

The pound also made strong gains against the dollar with traders concluding that the MPC's sixth reduction in seven months had greatly enhanced the chances of a soft landing for the economy.

The pound climbed a cent and a half against the dollar to close at \$1.6108 while the euro fell from 67.66p to 67.25p.

The stock market, however, gave only a muted reception to the cut with shares falling vic-

tim to profit-taking after the record-breaking run earlier this week. The FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed down 35.3 at 6,437.9.

Analysts are increasingly convinced that the Bank is close to the bottom of the rate-cutting cycle with the consensus that the MPC will reduce rates by only a further quarter point this year.

The fact that the Bank did not publish an explanatory statement with its rate decision was seized on as evidence that the decision was close run with perhaps only a bare majority of the MPC in favour of a further cut.

Industry and unions gave the decision only a lukewarm welcome, claiming that with the pound still highly valued it would do little to relieve the pressure on exporters.

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LINKS

WEBSITE: www.ecb.int
Weekend Money website:
http://www.times-money.co.uk

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Simon
Jordan
The PocketPhone
chief with the
turbo-charged manner
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STOCK MARKET	
FTSE 100	6437.9 (-35.3)
Yield	2.14%
FTSE All Share	2951.84 (-11.42)
Nikkei	10846.60 (-122.16)
New York	
Dow Jones	10088.09 (+2.78)
S&P Composite	1328.82 (+1.93)

US RATE	
Federal Funds	4.75% (4.75%)
Long bond	5.67% (5.67%)
Short bond	5.67% (5.67%)

LONDON MONEY	
3-month interbank	5.75% (5.75%)
Libor 3m	117.87 (117.99)

STERLING	
New York	
£/\$	1.6089 (1.6097)
£/¥	1.6108 (1.6108)
£/€	1.4887 (1.4779)
£/A\$	2.3707 (2.3685)
£/NZ\$	194.78 (193.84)
£/Ind	102.5 (101.9)

DOLLAR	
London	
\$/£	1.0638 (1.0723)
\$/¥	1.4729 (1.4617)
\$/A\$	1.2852 (1.2141)
\$/Ind	106.5 (105.6)

NORTH SEA OIL	
Brent 15-day (Jun)	\$14.50 (\$14.32)

GOLD	
London close	\$280.16 (\$280.05)
* denotes midday trading prices	
Exchange rates	

L'Oreal springs sales surprise

By CARL MORTISHED

L'OREAL, the French cosmetics and pharmaceuticals firm, stunned the market yesterday by revealing a near-10 per cent rise in sales in the first quarter.

The company, which owns the Lancôme, Laboratoires Garnier and Maybelline brands, increased sales in local currencies by 14.6 per cent. After currency losses, revenues were up 9.5 per cent to Fr17.1 billion (£1.76 billion).

Evidence that L'Oréal is continuing to gain market share sent the company's stock soaring 4.5 per cent on the Paris bourse and renewed speculation that it might take on Revlon, its struggling rival.

Revlon has hired Goldman Sachs and Lazard Frères to advise on disposals after a slide in earnings caused a share price collapse last year. However, analysts were sceptical yesterday about a L'Oréal takeover, pointing out that the French company is already strong in make-up. Revlon's core business.

L'Oréal's first-quarter boost followed a big rise last year when cosmetics surged 10.6 per cent, including a 20 per cent rise in the UK.

Commentary, page 29

Sainsbury's to shed 300 jobs from Savacentre

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM, RETAIL CORRESPONDENT

J SAINSBURY'S is set to announce up to 300 redundancies after deciding to close the headquarters of Savacentre. It will be the first significant job cuts at the group, Britain's second-largest supermarket operator, for five years.

Staff at the Savacentre head office in Wokingham have been told that they will hear the results of an 18-month long review of the business on Monday. Sainsbury's refused to comment last night on its plans for the business.

The move comes as Sainsbury's, along with Britain's other supermarkets, found itself in the firing line as John Bridgeman, Director-General of Fair Trading, formally announced that he was referring the sector to the Competition Commission for a full investigation.

Sainsbury's, which admitted after Christmas that trading had fallen away and that its

John Cleese-led advertising campaign had gone wrong, has been trialling a new look for Savacentre at its Colcote store. The 13 stores in the chain — which was intended to be the group's version of a continental hypermarket — have far lower margins and sales per square foot than the Sainsbury's supermarkets. The trial look has more food and less clothing and other non-food goods.

The Savacentres will be run from Sainsbury's main head office in Central London. About 80 jobs will have to be created to do the work.

One analyst said that the cost-cutting would be welcomed by the market. "Savacentre has not performed up to expectations. Net margins compared to similar-sized Tesco and Asda stores are not good."

The last round of job cuts at Sainsbury's came in March 1994 when 650 head and area office posts were axed.

The inquiry by the Competition Commission — the replacement to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission — will mean that Sainsbury's and Britain's other supermarkets will be under the microscope for the next 12 months.

Mr Bridgeman said he was concerned about barriers to entering the market, the impact of rising land costs, price competition, and the nature of the relationship between the supermarkets and their suppliers.

He also defended the techniques used by his officials in their eight-month inquiry. Dino Adriano, chief executive of Sainsbury's, attacked the research last week as "inadequate and inconclusive".

Mr Bridgeman said: "Sophisticated economic modelling is required to take into account the firms' levels of investment and risk. We have used a number of measures and have not exclusively relied upon any one indicator of profitability."

Mr Bridgeman stopped short of saying that the supermarkets were making excess profits. He said: "I have to conclude that there is a level of profitability here which requires further investigation by the Competition Commission."

Profits inquiry, page 14



Lindsay Owen-Jones, L'Oréal's chairman and chief executive, saw the company's shares soar on the Paris bourse

Shell cuts exploration budget by up to \$1bn

By CARL MORTISHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

SHELL is tightening its belt with a cut of up to \$1 billion (about £600 million) in its upstream exploration budget. The oil company yesterday told analysts and fund managers in New York that oil production was flat in the first quarter of the year but the company promised to meet its growth targets for the full year.

Shell has drastically cut investment in oil exploration and production, reflecting the tough environment and low oil prices. The company announced a capital budget for 1999 of \$11 billion in December, of which \$6 billion was earmarked for the upstream business. However, Shell indicated that it might rein in the budget by \$1.75 billion if oil prices remained weak. Yesterday, Phil Watts, group managing director, confirmed that capital investment would be down on the December figure.

Mr Watts said that Shell should achieve cost savings of \$300 million in the current year, part of a \$1.1 billion target of cost-savings for exploration and production to be achieved by 2001.

The oil company is investing \$900 million developing the Brentus field in the Gulf of Mexico with the construction of a tension leg platform, expected to lift 100,000 barrels per day from the 200 million barrel field.

Shell announced \$4.5 billion in asset write-downs in December and declared its intention to sell 40 per cent of its chemical portfolio, including a half share in Montell, the polypropylene business. The write-downs included \$2 billion in oil-producing assets in California, Texas and Venezuela.

Yesterday, the company said it would sell stakes in certain deep water oil

projects to share risk as well as a share in its prestigious Malampaya gas to power project in the Philippines. In addition a strategic partner is being sought for Shell's Venezuelan business.

Shell's annual report for 1998 reveals that Mark Moody-Stuart, the chairman, was paid just over £1 million last year, including £370,000 in realised gains from share options. His total package fell from £1.4 million in 1997.

Both Mr Moody-Stuart and Mr Watts received no bonus in 1998, a year in which Shell's net profits collapsed from \$7.8 billion to just \$400 million. Mr Moody-Stuart's base salary rose by 30 per cent in 1998 to £638,000 but a Shell spokesman said that the apparent increase in 1998 reflected his appointment as chairman half way through the 1997 financial year.

PocketPhone in talks with Palace

By CHRIS AYRES

THE financial woes of Crystal Palace Football Club, which was recently placed in administration with debts of £23 million, could soon be eased by one of Britain's largest mobile phone retailers, The PocketPhone Shop.

The company, headed by Simon Jordan, is negotiating a share purchase deal worth £750,000. Mr Jordan is also planning to buy up to a 25 per cent stake in the club, having offered to buy 5 per cent earlier this year for £1 million. He said: "That same kind of money will now buy me a much bigger stake. My aim is to wait until it comes out of administration."

Mr Jordan, 31, is also considering buying the 50 per cent stake in The PocketPhone Shop owned by his partner, Andrew Briggs, for an estimated £30 million.

Profile, page 31

Web hoax lifts PairGain

FROM ANDREW BUTCHER IN NEW YORK

WALL STREET thought it had a dream deal when a fast-moving Internet company was said to be on the end of a takeover bid. Shares of PairGain Technologies, a maker of high-speed Internet equipment, rocketed 35 per cent as dealers filled their boots.

The only problem was that the whole thing was an elaborate hoax. The share-buying frenzy was sparked by a report, purportedly from the Bloomberg financial news

service, saying that PairGain would be taken over for \$1.35 billion (£830 million).

The supposed report was drawn to the attention of Internet users at a website that discusses hot stocks, with the message: "Just found it on Bloomberg." The page looked and worked exactly like the Bloomberg Internet service.

The fraud was revealed by PairGain, whose chief financial officer, Charles McBrayer, said the fake was masterful:

"You'd swear on your mother it was a Bloomberg website."

The hoax is the latest in a line of cyber-swindles flogging Internet investors. Mr McBrayer said he assumed the person responsible on this occasion profited handsomely from the deception. "If you're going to go to this much trouble, you might as well make money on it," he said.

Despite the dismissal of the story as a PairGain hoax, shares were up 10 per cent at the close.

Gucci rejects new offer

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

GUCCI, the Italian fashion house, yesterday rejected an increased takeover offer from LVMH, the French luxury goods group, saying it came with "unacceptable" conditions.

But it added that it was "willing to continue discussions with LVMH to consider an offer that is in the best interests of the company, its shareholders and all stakeholders".

LVMH said in response that no further talks were planned before the court hearing on

April 22 in the battle for control of Gucci.

LVMH had said it was prepared to increase its \$81 (£50.60) per share takeover offer for Gucci to \$85, but only if Gucci issued new shares. The proposed share issue would dilute other large shareholders and enable LVMH to control the company by buying just half of the 34 per cent of the shares in public hands.

Gucci tried to preserve its independence from LVMH, after

it built up a 35 per cent stake in January, by issuing new shares to dilute LVMH's holding. It then sold 40 per cent of the enlarged share base to French retail group PPR. This made it virtually impossible for LVMH to make a successful takeover bid unless PPR agreed. LVMH said an alternative offer of \$91 a share, which required the PPR sale to be annulled, had also been rejected.

Commentary, page 29

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Stationery Office in demerger moves

By ROBERT LEA

THE STATIONERY OFFICE (TSO), the privatised former HMSO, has demerged into four operational companies as a precursor to separate flotations or sell-offs, which will net big profits for its chairman, Rupert Pennant-Rea, and Electra Fleming, the City financiers.

The business — best known as the publisher of government documents, *The Highway Code* and as the printer of passports — yesterday reported a

45 per cent rise in operating profits last year to £18 million, demonstrating a dramatic turnaround in fortunes. HMSO was privatised two-and-a-half years ago after accumulating losses of £50 million. Electra Fleming paid £54 million and raised another £71 million to fund investment.

TSO said it had completed a restructuring which gives operating independence to its four businesses: government publishing; Banner office supplies; document management, newly named Tactics; and security printing. Ownership of the companies remains unchanged.

A spokesperson for TSO said it is looking at all future options, including separate flotations or selling the divisions to trade buyers.

The business as a whole could command a price tag of about £200 million. At the time of the flotation Mr Pennant-Rea, the former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England who resigned after a tabloid kiss-and-tell scandal four years ago, and three senior colleagues including the group

chief executive, Bob Thian, are thought to have paid about £500,000 for a 10 per cent stake. Existing managers and employees received a further 10 per cent holding.

The group executive team will now break up, with Mr Thian, a former chief executive of North West Water, remaining only as a non-executive director of Tactics, the largest of the four businesses. Mr Pennant-Rea, however, will stay as chairman of each of the four companies.

TSO said that after interest charge

and a £2.5 million charge for the demerger, group pre-tax profits for 1998 came in at £10.3 million on turnover slightly down at £261 million. It made dividend payments to its shareholders of £4.9 million (£3.6 million).

The privatisation of the HMSO was dogged by controversy, with original government plans to sell the operations for about £100 million falling apart when due diligence investigations revealed black holes in the balance sheet. The National Audit Office later ruled that HMSO had been sold too cheaply.

ONdigital claims lead in battle for subscribers

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

ONDIGITAL, the digital terrestrial television service, said yesterday that it had chalked up 110,000 subscribers since its autumn launch and announced that it was planning to boost numbers by "premiering" top ITV programmes before they are shown on the ITV network.

ONDigital is a 50-50 venture by Carlton Communications and Granada, the two largest ITV companies. United News & Media, the third-largest, is also involved in digital terrestrial.

The news of programme specials and the better than expected subscription figures, plus the launch in June of a £500 ONDigital integrated television set came as a boost for Granada and Carlton. In a falling market, Granada shares rose 44p to £13.50, while Carlton was up 20p to 634p.

Stephen Grabiner, chief executive of ONDigital, claimed that the 110,000 subscription figure meant that "like for like we have signed up more new subscribers to digital TV than Sky".

In its first four months on air BSkyB, in which News International, owner of *The Times*, has a 40 per cent stake, signed up 350,000 households to the SkyDigital service. Of that, 120,000 were new to multi-channel television.

for-like" lead because it is available in about only 70 per cent of the country.

SkyDigital has set a target of one million digital subscribers by October, the end of its first year. ONDigital declined to set a target other than to say that it was meeting its business plan.

ONDigital said that it would break even when it has two million subscribers and that three million subscribers would produce an operating profit of £100 million a year; five million subscribers would bring profits of £250 million.

Pre-launch costs were £57 million, less than the £80 million expected, but marketing expenditure rose from £40 million to £90 million.

Of its plans with ITV, ONDigital revealed that it will be showing the final series of the long-running *Inspector Morse* before it appears on ITV, while *Prime Suspect* specials and a final series of *Crackers* will be broadcast before their appearance on ITV.

A continuing series of such specials is expected although agreement with ITV will be on a one-off basis.

Alba, which plans to manufacture 100,000 of the ONDigital integrated Bush TV sets this year, saw its shares rise 34p to 299p.

Media Times, page 41



SILENTNIGHT HOLDINGS, the UK's biggest bed and cabinet furniture maker, whose chief executive is Bill Simpson, above, said poor retail demand for cabinet furniture left profits flat last year after sales at its Merced subsidiary were "totally inadequate". Pre-tax profit was £16.3 million (£16.5 million) for the year ended January 30, 1999, on turnover of £236 million (£229 million). The final dividend of 8.3p (8.2p) takes the total for the year to 12.0p (11.5p).

SFA fines three for breaching trading rules

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

THE Securities and Futures Authority yesterday imposed fines and costs exceeding £58,000 on three individuals for serious breaches of City trading rules.

Baljeet Janjua, the former co-head of Swiss Bank Corporation's global asset swap group, was fined £30,000 and was ordered to pay £9,280 costs after forging a letter in order to complete a trade in a ¥4 billion (£20 million) Japanese medium-term note.

After receiving an internal directive to reduce SBC's positions in October 1997, Mr Janjua asked Riad Meliti, a junior member of the investment bank's Middle East desk, to sell the security.

After it was found difficult to sell, Mr Janjua agreed to make the security more attractive by attaching a "put" option, which would have enabled a buyer to sell the note back to SBC at the original price if markets fell.

Although this did nothing to cut SBC's risk exposure, Mr Janjua confirmed the offer by signing an unauthorised letter on SBC headed paper. SBC subsequently discovered and withdrew the deal. Mr Meliti has been reprimanded, fined £2,000 and ordered to pay £2,320 costs by the SFA.

In a second case, the SFA severely reprimanded Leslie Terrence Commons, a former inter-dealer broker with Cantor Fitzgerald International, and fined him £10,000, plus £5,000 costs, for trying to conceal £123,000 (£77,000) of losses incurred by Caniors in trades he did in Italian government bonds on November 13, 1997.

Australians block Coke acquisition

COCA-COLA, the soft drinks group, yesterday suffered a setback in its acquisition of rival Cadbury Schweppes' brands outside the US, when the Australian competition authority blocked the deal. The US\$1.05 billion (£1.1 billion) purchase, announced in December, involves Schweppes beverage brands in 120 countries outside the US, France and South Africa. Competition watchdogs in each of those countries must clear the deal.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission said that the acquisition was likely to breach its merger laws and "would be likely to eliminate any real prospect of effective future competition" in the Australian soft drinks market. It said the deal would take Coca-Cola's share of the country's market from 65 per cent to 75 per cent. Analysts said Coca-Cola is likely to offer to sell some of its non-international brands in Australia to get round the regulator. City Diary, page 31

Electra under fire

ELECTRA INVESTMENT TRUST has come under further fire from 3i Group, the venture capitalist which is making a £1.25 billion hostile takeover bid for the company. 3i said yesterday that Electra shareholders should question price comparisons their company has made between 3i's offer and Electra's share buyback. 3i said that, had Electra used 3i's closing price when it made its announcement on Wednesday, it would have valued 3i's offer at 742p, not 725p as Electra stated.

ICI company in MBO

ICI yesterday took a small step in its disposal programme by selling a chemicals trading business to its management. Chance & Hunt, based at Runcorn, buys in chemicals from more than 100 producers and sells them to businesses. It mainly serves UK companies and those located in the UK. The business last year had sales of £40 million and employed 46 people. The management buyout team plans to keep all the employees. ICI is trying to sell all its industrial chemicals operations and to turn itself into a consumer-oriented group.

Laird counter-attack

LAIRD GROUP yesterday moved to counter a sharp drop in last year's profits with news that it had rallied in the first three months of this year. The engineer saw pre-tax profits before exceptional charges last year to £40.3 million from £69.6 million as it suffered problems in its car body sealing division. With one-off charges for restructuring and the sale of businesses, Laird's profits fell further to £23.7 million. Earnings per share fell from 36.2p to 9.3p. The dividend was increased to 15p from 14.3p. Tempus, page 30

Job losses at Saga

SAGA PETROLEUM is laying off 40 staff in the UK as the Norwegian oil company launches a worldwide retrenchment in an attempt to save £400 million (£33 million) a year, a reduction in overhead of 20 per cent. The company, which has a one-fifth share in the Britannia field in the North Sea, is cutting 430 jobs worldwide and yesterday said that it would pull out of Angola, where it has an interest in Block 1. A spokesman said that further exploration had become too expensive.

Bell issues pathfinder

BELL GROUP, a provider of closed-circuit television surveillance, intruder detection, access control and fire alarm systems for banks, yesterday issued its pathfinder prospectus for a full listing on the London Stock Exchange. The group, whose chief executive is Patrick Curran, a former executive with Thorn Security Group, is looking to raise £8 million from the sale of 30 per cent of the company. Last year it had operating profits of £3.8 million on turnover of £34 million.

Barclays Base Rate Change

Barclays Bank PLC

announces that with effect from

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from 5.50% to 5.25%



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Life insurers face £14bn bill

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

BRITISH life insurers could be hit with a £14 billion bill to cover the cost of guaranteed annuity options given to policyholders since the 1970s, Standard & Poor's says.

The credit rating agency said this figure, which is already £3 billion higher than estimated, could reach £28 billion if long-term interest rates continue to slide.

This would dwarf the provisions of £14 billion to £18 billion that life insurers are making

against the pensions mis-selling scandal and would sharply reduce the industry's total surplus, put at £78 billion in 1997.

Insurers have only recently woken up to the scale of the problem they face with guaranteed annuities, which allow their policyholders to take a retirement income of about 11 per cent on their savings compared with the 8 per cent offered by the best conventional annuities today.

In an unusually grave report, Standard & Poor's gave warning that life insurers' statutory solvency for 1998 would be "significantly" affected.

Technical reserves in some cases would have to be doubled, the agency said, while some insurers would see their financial strength ratings drop.

Although shareholders were likely to be shielded from the impact, millions of policyholders would suffer lower bonus rates and smaller returns as

companies sought to cope with the extra financial burden. The growing pressure would also accelerate the pace of takeovers of small and medium-sized mutual insurers, the report said. Last year NPI fell to AMP, the Australian insurer, after being fatally weakened by its exposure to guaranteed annuities.

Of the 16 large insurers surveyed by Standard & Poor's, only Equitable Life has so far been explicitly affected.

EXCHANGE RATES			
Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.67	2.50	209.82
Austria Sch	13.75	13.75	182.29
Belgium Fr	66.13	66.13	0.672
Canada \$	2.534	2.348	3.456
Cyprus Cyp	0.9037	0.8522	3.17
Denmark Kr	11.64	10.75	12.15
Egypt	5.89	5.08	310.47
Finland Mk	9.29	8.64	288.44
France Fr	10.22	9.44	10.65
Germany DM	3.069	2.827	9.69
Greece Dr	506	469	258.72
Hong Kong \$	13.31	12.11	14.21
Iceland	1.29	1.02	13.01
Indonesia	17708	12708	2.304
Ireland	1.2247	1.1357	620958
Israel Sh	6.86	6.23	57985
Italy Lira	2093	2816	1.718
Japan Yen			1.575
Malta			
Netherlands Gld			
New Zealand \$			
Norway Kr			
Portugal Esc			
S Africa Rd			
South Afr			
Sweden Kr			
Switzerland Fr			
Turkey Lira			
USA \$			

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

FirstGroup gets GAG

By PAUL ARMSTRONG

FIRSTGROUP, the bus and train operator, has paid £10.6 million for GAG, which runs 400 buses in the South West.

GAG, which reported an annual operating profit of £506,000, is not expected to contribute to FirstGroup's earnings until 2000. FirstGroup will satisfy the purchase with £2.7 million cash, £5.2 million in loan

notes and by issuing 657,734 shares. It will also inherit GAG's net debt of £2.9 million.

FirstGroup said GAG's fleet had an average age of 11 to 12 years compared with eight years for FirstGroup's buses. However, it said it was too early to estimate the cost of the upgrade of the GAG fleet. Tempus, page 30

NatWest Business Deposit Interest Rates

NatWest announces the following interest rates, effective from 9 April 1999:

Solicitors' Reserve Account					
Old Rate	Old Rate	Balance		New Rate	New Rate
per annum (%)	per annum (%)	per annum (%)	per annum (%)	per annum (%)	per annum (%)
		Instant access - interest paid quarterly			
3.70	3.75	£250,000 +		3.45	3.49
3.60	3.65	£100,000 - £249,999		3.35	3.39
3.25	3.29	£25,000 - £99,999		3.00	3.03
2.75	2.78	£2,000 - £24,999		2.50	2.52
2.25	2.27	£500 - £1,999		2.00	2.02
1.50	1.51	£0 - £499		1.25	1.26

Where appropriate, tax will be deducted at source from interest credited or paid. The Annual Equivalent Rate (AER) is a notional rate which shows the gross interest rate as if paid and compounded on an annual basis.



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MPC winning on points



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

So the European Central Bank does maintain a grasp of economic reality after all. For three months, the ECB has seemed to delight in informing the suffering inhabitants — not to say struggling politicians — of the core European countries that there was nothing wrong with the eurozone economy. It was a display of monetary virility that not even Oskar Lafontaine, the former German Finance Minister, could challenge.

No sooner is Herr Lafontaine ushered into the political wilderness than the ECB proves that it can not only cut rates, but actually wrong-foot the market in its generosity. Wim Duisenberg, President of the ECB, insisted yesterday that the half-point cut had been chosen to signal that there would be no further rate reductions. Perhaps, but it also provides the booster that an economy that is desperately short of confidence badly needed. With an almost total absence of inflationary pressures in the eurozone, a half-point cut is no more of a gamble than the expected quarter point would have been.

The half point is a tactic that the Bank of England has also learnt to employ. The three half-point cuts that the Bank has instituted in the past seven months have spurred the rapid turnaround seen in the service and retail sectors of the economy faster than six quarter points could have done. A half-point cut

makes a noticeable difference and consumers, in particular, have responded extremely positively to the sharp decline in mortgage rates. Confidence has returned to levels not seen since the first half of last year. Dangerous concepts such as "housing boom" are even beginning to creep back into the economic vocabulary.

The Bank's decision yesterday to return to only inching rates lower may well have been influenced by this sharp rise in consumer confidence. The Bank's departure from normal practice in not publishing an explanatory note to enlighten us on the reasons for its rate reduction certainly suggests that the Monetary Policy Committee vote was a close-run thing and rates are now clearly near their trough.

And it may be that, with its meagre cut, the Bank will have succeeded in easing the lot of industry a little without risking sending consumers on an inflationary spree. For the first time since the Bank's rate-cutting spree began in the autumn, lenders resisted the temptation to automatically pass on the gains to homeowners. The financial services companies are increasingly aware of the predic-

ament of savers who have seen their rates dwindle to often sub-inflation levels. A half-point cut would have probably forced lenders to offer at least a partial reduction in mortgage loan rates, but yesterday's quarter-point reduction has allowed them for the moment to leave rates unchanged.

Fine-tuning is a notoriously difficult business, but the MPC might just have managed it.

OFT bites hand that feeds UK

John Bridgeman could not have offered a clearer invitation to foreign grocers than he did yesterday. He might as well have stood on the White Cliffs, blaring through a megaphone that overseas supermarket operators would be guaranteed a welcome if they would promise to come to Britain and stop Tesco doing so well. Should

one of them be tempted to launch a bid for Asda, Sainsbury or even Sainsbury, they are now assured that there would be no competition from a national player.

In subjecting the grocery business to a Monopolies Commission inquiry destined to last at least a year, the Director-General of Fair Trading has effectively put paid to any mergers among the big players. But if a Carrefour or a Walmart should become the proud owner of a British company, it might not exhibit the care and concern for British suppliers that food manufacturers and farmers might hope. Those Welsh lamb producers would be unlikely to find Carrefour a more supportive customer than Sainsbury.

As the French Government tries to encourage three banks to come together to form a national champion, which would be the biggest bank in the world, our European partners must puzzle as to why Britain seems so keen

to weaken its own players. Mr Bridgeman says he is concerned that there are "significant barriers to new competitors in high-volume grocery retailing in Britain". Yet in recent years continental discounters have marched into this country and now have more than 850 outlets. Aldi, Netto and Lidl fight at the bottom end of the market, where price, not range or quality, is the overriding consideration.

Mr Bridgeman cites the cost of land and property as a barrier to newcomers but a Carrefour or Walmart has deep pockets. That they have chosen not to battle to open full-scale supermarkets in Britain could just be because they do not see rich pickings to be had from challenging the existing stores. Even the researches of McKinsey found that the Brits were not doing a bad job.

But the Government had decided that the supermarket giants were a good target and Mr Bridgeman has obliged. It would

be a dangerous course if the OFT and the MMC were to become agents of Government, but one cannot help but feel that, when the MMC deliberations are concluded, the desire will be for some findings that will provide good material for Alastair Campbell's spinning wheel.

Raising the bidding in the fashion stakes

It may not be impossible to win a contested bid when 42 per cent of the shares are held by a single rival but it certainly is not easy. So the ingenious Bernard Arnault has come up with the idea of asking Gucci to move the goal posts in his favour. The amazingly accommodating Dutch company law would sanction such a move but, not surprisingly, Gucci is not inclined to do so.

In the battle of the handbags, M Arnault's desire to get hold of Gucci is pushing him to up the price of the luxury brand to truly luxurious levels. But he is not about to put his \$5 billion on the table unless he thinks the deal is his. Francois Pinault may be insisting that his rapidly acquired 42 per cent does not give him con-

trol of Gucci but it puts him in a pretty powerful position. Having failed with his request for a few extra shares yesterday, M Arnault is now hoping that he can persuade the courts to remove the obstacle of the Pinault stake.

The energetic M Arnault will not be idle in the meantime. He and his team of three banks will soon start canvassing the smaller shareholders in Gucci, asking them whether they would not like the chance to accept his cash instead of risking seeing the shares fall back to the less luxurious levels where they languished before LVMH stepped in.

But since M Arnault seems to want Gucci with all the intensity that fashion freaks pursue Tom Ford's latest creation, the minority holders may prefer to sit tight and hope for more.

Vyner touch

WHEN Tom Vyner was a top director of J Sainsbury, suppliers would quake as they headed towards Stamford Street. He had not swallowed the idea of "partnership culture"; Mr Vyner believed in the adversarial way of doing business. And perhaps it still works. In a cute move, Lindsay Owen-Jones snapped up Mr Vyner on his retirement from Sainsbury. The result is that L'Oréal has boosted British sales by a fifth, much of it through the supermarkets. You can bet he got a good price, too.

Swallow moves to sell all its tenanted pubs

By DOMINIC WALSH

SWALLOW GROUP yesterday confirmed that it has put all 664 of its tenanted pubs up for sale in a move that will raise funds to expand its hotel and managed pub divisions.

The announcement came after the recent collapse of negotiations to sell 350 of Swallow's tenanted pubs and its Vaux and Ward's breweries to a management buyout team for £63 million. Failing the last-minute appearance of a fresh bidder, the breweries will close on July 2.

Analysts believe that once Swallow's exit from brewing and tenanted pubs is complete, the company will become a sitting duck for potential predators. Last year, it rejected approaches from both Stakis and Whitbread.

Swallow said that it has asked its advisers, BT Alex Brown and Noble Grossart, to

sell all its tenanted pubs after receiving expressions of interest for them. It added that it would consider offers for "all or part of the estate, with or without the breweries".

One of the parties to have expressed an interest in all 664 pubs was Alchemy Partners, the venture capitalist behind the abortive management buyout. Last week, in a last-ditch attempt to save the deal, it offered £125 million for the entire package, including the two breweries, but Swallow rejected the price as inadequate.

The tenanted estate, described by one rival as "a hugely mixed bag" has a book value of just over £100 million, although Peter Catesby, Swallow's chief executive, believes it could be worth up to £130 million.

There is unlikely to be any shortage of interest. Both

Mansfield Brewery and Harveys & Hansons, the Nottingham brewer, are thought to be eyeing the Ward's brewery in Sheffield plus 196 pubs that carry the Ward's badge. Among the possible bidders for larger parts of the estate are Pubmester, Enterprise Inns and, despite its recent rebuff, Alchemy Partners. Nomura and Punch Taverns are also being mentioned as possible buyers.

The disposals would leave Swallow Group with 37 Swallow Hotels and 175 managed pubs, some of which trade under the Barcentro and Bramwell & Co brands. Mr Catesby said that the disposals should provide sufficient funds to allow him to make "some really quite serious acquisitions".

However, most observers believe that it is only a matter of time before Swallow attracts the vultures. One analyst said: "I doubt whether anyone will make a move until the hornet's nest of the breweries and tenancies is safely out of the way. But it then becomes a nice clean company with some very attractive assets."

Swallow's shares shed 3p to 288½p.

Tempus, page 30



Tempus gives warning on potential hostile bid

By CHRIS AYRES

CHRIS INGRAM, chairman of Tempus, yesterday gave warning that any hostile takeover bid for the advertising group from WPP, its arch-rival, would "destroy the value" of the company.

His comments were prompted by WPP's 18 per cent stake in the business, which has provoked City speculation that the marketing services company could make a bid for Tempus.

Mr Ingram said: "We're en-

joying what we're doing, and we have a long-term track record. Anything that got in the way of that, such as a hostile bid, would destroy the value of the asset that the bidder was trying to get hold of. I know what the key people in this business want."

Tempus yesterday reported a 40 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for the year to December 31, 1998, to £13.2 million, on sales of £1.2 billion, up 27 per cent. Earnings per share rose 15 per cent to 10.8p, and

the company said that on June 4 it would pay a final dividend of 2.37p, making a total for year of 3.1p — an increase of 14 per cent on the previous year.

Mr Ingram said: "We anticipate that there will be good development opportunities during the year, both regionally in the US and Asia, and in the new media and marketing research sectors. Overall we are confident of another year of satisfactory progress."

Tempus, page 30

Philip Rainbow, a cheesemaker at the Cheddar Gorge Cheese Company, which Queensborough, the troubled leisure group, has sold to Premiercross, a private company, for £1.2 million, some of it deferred, against a £1.59 million book value. It is one of six visitor attractions Queensborough put up for sale in September.

Waterfall to hit back with results

By DOMINIC WALSH

WATERFALL HOLDINGS, which this week launched a hostile £41 million bid for European Leisure, is to bring forward its half-year results in an attempt to defuse doubts over the value of its all-paper offer. European, which rejected the bid and is pressing ahead with a recommended offer from Allied Leisure, had cast doubts on the profitability of its snooker and pool cue rival, saying that its offer failed to contain a profit forecast or any comment on current trading.

Waterfall said it would accelerate release of the figures, which would show "an entirely satisfactory result for the first half". It also poured scorn on criticism of its accounting practices, claiming: "Waterfall has consistently adopted more conservative accounting policies than European in relation to the depreciation of freehold and long leasehold assets."

Waterfall's shares were off 14p to 55p yesterday, valuing its offer at 112p a share. European's shares rose just 6p to 91p. The bid from Allied, whose shares rose 4p to 24½p, is currently worth 89p a share.

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Poon boosts Harvey Nichols

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM, RETAIL CORRESPONDENT



Poon: restructuring assets

SHARES in Harvey Nichols yesterday rose by more than 3 per cent on hopes that complex restructuring plans announced by Dickson Poon, its Hong Kong-based chairman, could lead to him, or an outside bidder, buying the luxury department store group.

Dickson Concepts, the Hong Kong retail and property group owning 50.1 per cent of Harvey Nichols, is to sell all its non-Asian assets into a company owned by Mr Poon. Shares in Harvey Nichols closed 6½p up at 195p, their highest since last summer. Mr

Poon bought the business in 1991 for £51 million and listed it on the London Stock Exchange in 1996. At yesterday's price, it is worth £107 million.

Mr Poon said that the latest move, which will cost him HK\$1.38 billion (£111 million), is designed to ringfence shareholders in Dickson Concepts from exposure to the heavy investment programme he has planned for his European business, made up mainly of Harvey Nichols and ST Dupont, a French luxury goods operation. Shares in Dickson Concepts have performed

poorly on the Hong Kong stock exchange amid worries about its Asian businesses.

Harvey Nichols, which also runs restaurants, including one at London's Oxo Tower, has stores in London and Leeds. It is to open a third in Edinburgh, and is looking at a fourth in Manchester or Newcastle. It is rumoured to be also considering a store in the City of London.

In restructuring his business empire, Mr Poon proposes to lift his stake in Dickson Concepts from 51.9 per cent to as much as 75 per cent.

Good News For NatWest Small Business Customers

Interest rates applicable to Business Overdraft Agreements, Business Loan Agreements* and Flexible Business Loan Agreements* are reduced by 1/4% per annum with effect from 9 April 1999.

*This notice does not apply to agreements which specify the rate as fixed or linked to Base Rate.

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There can be few more potent examples of how peace is changing the Middle East than Omah Salah. At 31, he is the chief executive of Century Investment Group, Jordan's largest industrial company. His ten factories make underwear for Marks & Spencer, casual clothes for the Gap and Banana Republic chains and cork caps for Pepsi Cola bottles. However, the big surprise is that almost all of this is either sold to Israel or exported in joint ventures with Israeli companies.

The company, which reported a turnover of £62 million last year, has been called "a role model for the future of the Middle East" by Stuart Eizenstat, US Under Secretary of State. Yet Salah founded it just four years ago on a whim.

"I was stuck in a traffic jam in Los Angeles, listening to the news on the radio. Suddenly I realized that this transitional period in the Middle East, from conflict to peace, had fantastic business

Manufacturing progress out of peace

potential," says the entrepreneur, who was educated at Pangbourne College in Berkshire.

Salah left his job and headed back to Amman. Overcoming his own prejudices, he made his way to Israel — which then had no official ties with Jordan — and called the offices of large Israeli companies. Several Israeli chief executives agreed to see the young Jordanian out of curiosity.

After the signing of the peace agreement between Jordan and Israel in October 1994, Salah's unorthodox methods began to bear fruit. Dov Lautman, managing director of Delta Galil, the Israeli textile giant, agreed to set up a factory in Jordan which Salah would run. Delta has annual sales of £190 million and produces under-

wear for brand names such as Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren.

Century's joint venture with Delta, in the Irbid industrial estate, 80km from Amman, is now the largest garment manufacturing facility in Jordan. Century's nine other factories in Irbid employ more than 2,000 people.

"We do all the recruiting, take care of the local infrastructure, sort out the logistics," says Salah. Despite high expectations on both sides, the peace treaty between the two countries has not produced many joint ventures. There is no free trade agreement between Jordan and Israel, and only £15 million worth of trade annually between the two countries. Salah says that co-operation makes good economic sense and



Salah: good economic sense

claims that Century has created more jobs than any other business in Jordan, where the official unemployment rate is 16 per cent — but which, according to analysts, is actually closer to 25 per cent. "People think the joint ventures are exploit-

ing Jordanians, but if you ask the hundreds of people that we provide jobs for, they say 'we're very happy to be working'. There's a lot of hypocrisy about this issue," says Salah.

In July 1995 Century went public. Large shareholders include the Arab Banking Corporation and the Jordan National Bank. The value of the company's shares on the Jordan stock market has doubled over the past year, and Salah plans to float Century on the London Stock Exchange later this year.

No wonder Salah is so enthusiastic about business potential in the region. "A lot of people will build a television factory and then say 'let's go to Sony'. I want to go to directly to Sony and have

them build their factories in Jordan."

Investors are attracted to Jordan by the low cost of workers — unskilled workers earn £90 a month. Foreign companies are also exempted from paying corporation tax in Jordan.

But the real pull for foreign companies is a new free trade agreement — Irbid was designated the first qualified industrial zone by the US last year, giving it free trade access to US markets. Salah is keen to sign such an agreement with the European Union.

"The irony is, Jordan, Palestine and Israel all have free trade agreements with the EU. But mix them together and they immediately forfeit the right to enter the European Union. I've appealed to

Blair, Major, Kohl. They all say, 'yes, we've got to fix this'. Well, fix it," says Salah emphatically.

There is a catch. The US stipulates that, to qualify for the benefits of qualified industrial zone status, 11 per cent of the materials used must come from Israel. If raw materials are used from both Jordan and Israel, they must each provide 20 per cent. This clause angered many Jordanians. The Israeli unions have also complained, saying that cheap Jordanian wages are taking away their jobs.

Salah, with the fervour of the converted, hopes that more Jordanians and Israelis will come round to his way of thinking.

"I've had a fantastic enlightening experience, where I've found that Israelis and Arabs can really get along. And everyone knows that the fastest way to get to peace is through economic co-operation."

DINA SHILOH

Mobile phone entrepreneur sets out his latest pitch

Chris Ayres traces the rapid rise of a retail millionaire whose new goal is a soccer club

Joe Pesci had been born in Croydon, he might have turned out something like Simon Jordan. The 31-year-old mobile phone tycoon and aspiring football club financier certainly seems to have learnt much of his negotiating tactics from the American actor's mobster movies. In mid-conversation, you almost expect him to vault his desk, grab you by the collar, and whisper: "Do you think I'm a funny guy, huh?"

When *The Times* meets Jordan, he is standing in the centre of his tennis court-sized office — arms outstretched, upper-lip curled — explaining why he has issued a High Court writ against Ulrika Jonsson. Jordan's relationship with the blonde sex symbol began when he paid her about £60,000 to promote his successful company, The PocketPhone Shop, for 18 months.

Their relationship became strained when Jordan rebuked the television star for turning up late to a shop opening. It's easy to imagine that Jonsson did not appreciate being treated like a gormless 18-year-old shop assistant, but Jordan insists that this was not the reason for their spat.

The real cause remains unclear, but Jordan claims that Jonsson has a further £105,000 worth of work to do. Jonsson, unsurprisingly, argues otherwise. "I'm going to get that money," Jordan fumes. "I don't care if I have to pay more than £105,000 in court fees to get it. I'm going to get it."

Everything about Jordan tells you that he is a man who has made a big pile of cash very quickly indeed. He wears the kind of outfits — Top Man meets Armani — that you could easily imagine a Premiership footballer buying for his week-



Simon Jordan has turned a £30,000 investment into a company worth an estimated £65 million in just four years

end trip to Stringfellow. To complete the image, he smokes the occasional cigar and drives a silver Ferrari 550 to the office. Needless to say, it looks suitably out of place parked outside The PocketPhone Shop's headquarters in a concrete business park in Slough.

"I suppose you've got to be careful about the signs you're giving out," Jordan says, referring to the £140,000 car (which he says was a "bonus payment" from The PocketPhone Shop). "But what's wrong with being very successful, and having all the trappings of it?" At least Jordan seems to spread his cash around: his personal assistant has a bright red BMW coupe, and the company's staff car park is jammed with other similarly ostentatious examples from the German car industry.

Yet Jordan's arrogance is partly justified. In just four years he has turned a £30,000 investment into a company worth an estimated £65 million. The son of a *Daily Mail*

print worker, Jordan went into business after deciding against becoming a professional footballer at the age of 16 (he signed youth forms with both Crystal Palace and Chelsea). After completing a degree in Computer Sciences, he went to work in the City for Dun & Bradstreet, the credit information group. At the age of 21 he decided to go it alone and set up his own mobile phone company.

After two years the business collapsed so Jordan moved to New York to start again. He became homesick and flew back to London to work for The Carphone Warehouse, an experience that ultimately inspired him to set up his own chain of mobile phone shops, based on the same idea of offering customers handsets from all four of Britain's mobile phone operators. Jordan says his entrepreneurial ability comes from a passion for sport, and he views business very much as a game that you either win or lose. Yet the PocketPhone Shop

was not entirely Jordan's own creation. In fact, he launched the business in 1994 with the help of Andrew Briggs, a colleague and former estate agent. They opened their first shop in Slough, with the company's headquarters migrating from a small room behind the counter to the building upstairs, then to a 13,000 sq ft business park around the corner.

The PocketPhone Shop now has more than 120 outlets throughout Britain, employing more than 650 staff, and is currently in talks to buy a chain of 22 shops in Australia. Jordan is also planning to move the head office again, this time to a 41,000 sq ft office block, also in Slough.

Jordan is clearly an inspiring boss, but he also appears to have created a culture of fear within The PocketPhone Shop. He has just spent £250,000 hiring a team of "mystery shoppers" to assess customer serv-

ice in every outlet, and he admits that some of their reports resulted in "disciplinary proceedings". He is spending a further £250,000 installing two-way cameras in all his shops' computer terminals, so he can look in on staff at any time of day from the comfort of his Slough office. "The staff will definitely not like it," he says with relish, giving the impression that the investment is all part of some schoolboy prank.

Like most entrepreneurs, Jordan says he finds it hard to relax outside work. He has even fitted his car and his six-bedroom home in Cookham with an elaborate computer system that tells him exactly how many mobile phones are being sold by The PocketPhone Shop at any moment in time — and exactly which employees in which stores are responsible for the sales. Presumably, the technology will also eventually allow him to watch them.

He says he avoids socialising with other mobile phone in-

dusty big-wigs (he appears to have a particular dislike for Charles Dunstone, founder of The Carphone Warehouse), and instead spends his spare time with his girlfriend. However, he clearly enjoys throwing parties, and proudly reveals that he recently entertained Mike Reid (aka Frank Butcher from *EastEnders*).

At the moment Jordan's only sizeable business interest aside from The PocketPhone Shop is Crystal Palace, his beloved football club, which is facing financial collapse. Jordan says he is negotiating a £750,000 three-year shirt sponsorship deal with the club, and is interested in buying a stake of up to 25 per cent. But he is aware that his involvement with the troubled club, which recently went into administration, could ruin his image in the City, potentially harming a flotation of The PocketPhone Shop. "I'm a big fan of Palace, but I'm not stupid," he says. "I'm not putting my directorship in jeopardy."

Meanwhile, Jordan also has plans to overhaul The PocketPhone Shop's share structure. He admits that he is interested in buying Briggs's 50 per cent stake in the company for about £30 million, with the ultimate intention of floating the business within two years. "A business has one leader," Jordan says, without blinking. "I decided some years ago that that would be me. Andrew wants to go off and pursue other areas."

Jordan insists that the parting of ways is amicable. As if to prove it, he has decorated his office wall with an enormous photograph of himself with his arm around Briggs, taken at one of the company's summer balls. Both men are wearing dinner jackets, clutching champagne glasses and beaming. Jordan, however, looks far by the happier of the two.

New system sees car sales march ahead

Worried manufacturers perked up by T-reg tonic, says Arthur Leathley

CAR manufacturers yesterday declared T to be a success as they braced better than expected sales growth last month on the back of the first stage in the twice-yearly plate change.

March sales soared by more than 70 per cent on last year as customers reacted to heavy discounts on some T-registration models.

The unexpectedly high sales figures saved the motor industry from a catastrophic first quarter after the huge slump in orders during January and February. The 370,000 new registrations ensured a first-quarter increase of 2 per cent, after sales had slipped by more than a quarter in the opening two months.

Although the new figures brought relief to an industry braced for a fall in sales over the year, there was little cheer for troubled Rover, which again saw its market share dip.

Rover has consistently seen its share slip since the end of last year, and last month's figures showed a drop from 10 per cent to 7 per cent, leaving it well behind market leaders Ford and Vauxhall and also trailing Peugeot once again.

British manufacturers suffered a fall in market penetration as imports continued to grow, especially from Eastern Europe and the Far East.

The rise in car sales surprised industry leaders, who expected September to be by far the strongest month for orders under the new six-monthly plate changes.

Some had feared that companies and private buyers would delay placing orders un-

til after last month's Budget. Although the Budget contained heavier taxes on company cars and fuel, manufacturers do not expect the measures to harm sales.

Senior industry figures admit, however, that they do not know whether September will also show a bigger increase than originally forecast, or whether the March increase will be at the expense of orders at the next plate change.

Despite the overall rise in sales over the first quarter, manufacturers are not altering their overall forecasts of a 9 per cent fall in annual sales, to two million.

Roger King, acting chief executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, said: "The new plates have clearly been a big hit with customers and we are pleased to see that the switch to a twice-yearly system is going so well."

The March boom helped sales for the first three months of the year to total 622,562, a 2.1 per cent increase on the first quarter of 1998.

Ford celebrated the arrival of its award-winning Focus as Britain's top-selling car. The Focus, launched last October as a replacement for the popular Escort, beat off the challenge of Ford's own Fiesta to top the March 1999 sales charts.

The March 1999 top ten sellers were: 1 Ford Focus, 2 Ford Fiesta, 3 Vauxhall Astra, 4 Vauxhall Corsa, 5 Vauxhall Vectra, 6 Renault Megane, 7 Renault Clio, 8 Volkswagen Golf, 9 Ford Mondeo, 10 Peugeot 206.

In the can

THE mighty Coca-Cola Corporation faces an unaccustomed defeat in Paris today and a court ruling that will end its long attempt to buy Orangina, the French soft drink with the distinctive pear-shaped bottle.

Coke first tried to buy the soft drinks business from Pernod Ricard at the end of 1987 for £520 million, but the deal was stopped by the French Finance Ministry last autumn after complaints from Pepsi. Coke appealed to the Conseil d'Etat, France's highest court, which will rule today.

Everyone expects the Americans to lose and Dominique Strauss-Kahn, France's Finance Minister — "looking a bit tired these days," says my in-

formant unkindly — to emerge victorious. Coke will have to walk away. This being France, defeats for the Government in the Conseil are as rare as ministers without mistresses.

MOST former Tory Cabinet ministers are festooned with non-executive directorships by now, but one has only just succumbed to his first. Sir George Young, known for his fondness for bicycling everywhere — "in London only," he adds — and his dislike of smoking, is joining the sheltered housebuilder McCarthy & Stone.

"They approached me directly," he tells me. "I haven't been looking for any directorships — this is the only one, and I only took it on because I've always been interested in housing." He was, after all, Housing Minister for almost four years.

Forest player

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE Novelli has persuaded his countryman David Ginola, the Spurs footballer, to help to launch his latest acquisition, Gordaleton Mill, a country house hotel in the New Forest. This is something of a return to Novelli's roots because he earned his first Michelin star at the hotel's restaurant six years ago. The French chef, whose six



restaurants now turn over more than £6.5 million a year, is thought to have paid considerably less than the £1.5 million asking price for Gordaleton. Novelli has also just been named one of the UK's "50 most alluring men", he tells me smugly, adding that Ginola failed to make the list.

On points

GEOFFREY DICKS, economics analyst at Greenwich NatWest, included a plaintive memo to Mervyn King at the Bank of England in his latest forecast, published before yesterday's base rate cut. He admitted that, month by month, he has had a bad run of form in predicting the Monetary Policy Committee's decisions.

"This run predates the loss of form of a certain football team that we both support," he says sadly. "The message is

clear: if we wish to salvage something from the rest of the season, I have got to start calling the MPC right." Good news for Aston Villa, the object of both men's affections, because Dicks had tentatively suggested a quarter-point cut before yesterday.

I ring to congratulate him, and get his colleague, John O'Sullivan. "Villa isn't mentioned around here any more," he says with a hint of satisfaction. "Earlier in the season you never heard an end to it, but it's all gone very quiet of late."

formances. The FT people are unrepentant. "We always knew that in the month of April there would be no history," one tells me cheerfully. "The data will be available at the end of this month." Still, I get the impression they would rather not have noticed.

Paint it black

DIRECT advertises itself as Europe's leading direct marketing magazine and distributes a stylishly black media pack. Executives are encouraged to staple their business cards, also modishly black, to the front cover before they distribute the packs.

As you can see, the effect is not always as intended.

MARTIN WALLER
city.diary@the-times.co.uk



Black spot: the front cover of Direct's media packs

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TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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71	Agents	229	-12%		
72	Agents	271			
73	Agents	271			
74	Agents	271			
75	Agents	271			
76	Agents	271			
77	Agents	271			
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96	Agents	271			
97	Agents	271			
98	Agents	271			
99	Agents	271			
100	Agents	271			



JAZZ
Kyle Eastwood
 brings his
 band to London
 PAGE 35

THE TIMES ARTS

POP
 The sound
 of violence
 from Eminem
 PAGE 37



Prim, proper and a bit of a weed

When Claudius and his courtiers enter the Young Vic for the version of *The Mousetrap* that Agatha Christie did not write, they are greeted by an odd sight. It is Paul Rhys's Hamlet posed with arms outstretched beside a tree, a brown wig and a crown of thorns on his head. Is he playing mad? Is the director, Laurence Boswell, signalling to us that the play occurs in a Christian context, and that the prince must die to cure rotten Denmark? Or is it, as I felt, an inadvertent indication of the limitations of Rhys, who more than once put me in mind of the gentle Jesus, meek and mild, of Charles Wesley's sentimental hymn.

Boswell's four-hour production occurs on and between two small black stages linked by a retractable black causeway. It is a setting that invites fluency and simplicity, and on the whole that is what the flanking spectators get. Don't

ask me why the "seafaring men" who deliver Hamlet's missive resemble members of Smersh fresh from hijacking a nuclear sub, or why Rhys orates about destiny while scrubbing his nails and Yorick's skull inside a hot sunken bath, or why the players look as if they are auditioning for the tramps in *Waiting for Godot*, or why at the end Chinese-style model warriors line the causeway. Just try to believe me when I say that, considering it mixes guns and swords, medieval robes and modern trousers, this is not a notably tricky revival.

But is it a particularly good one? There I cannot be so sure. Rhys is undeniably one of our finest young actors, but he is tackling a part that relentlessly exposes any holes in a performer's range. Where is Hamlet's fire and frenzy? Or the pride, vindictiveness and ambition of which he accuses himself, or the soldier's eye and sword that impress Ophelia.

THEATRE

Hamlet Young Vic

or the evidence for Fortinbras's claim that he would have proved most royal, or the scathing humour that some modern actors have found in the character? Nowhere much. Well, there is no such being as a complete Hamlet. Some may find Rhys's interpretation — a bereft but inadequate son who actually uses his last moments to cradle the mother who has followed his adored father to purgatory — more than adequate. He quivers and throbs with sensitive intelligence and fastidious feeling. But his more robust moments, as when he grapples on the ground with Ophelia, seem forced. There is a hint of primness in his manner as well as of Michael Howard in his vow-

els. To be blunt, I thought him a bit monotonous.

As Ophelia, Megan Dodds is too cool, too unfazed by Hamlet's rejection, for her falling apart to be wholly credible; but I suppose she could argue that the death of Robin Soans's punctilious but fond Polonius has helped to motivate her. Meanwhile, Suzanne Bertish does a nice, subtle job of suggesting Gertrude's growing alienation from Donald Sumpter's Claudius, as does Sumpter of showing his alienation from health, happiness and himself. But I suspect the performance that will stick in my mind is one that defiantly contradicts Tom Stoppard's sympathetic view of the attendant lords. Was there ever such an ambitious creep as Leo Wringer's bowing and sometimes prostrate Rosencrantz? Beside him, Malvolio might be a rebellious teenager.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



In the embrace of madness: Megan Dodds (Ophelia) and Paul Rhys (Hamlet) in Laurence Boswell's Young Vic production

Fiends and relations

By Many Wounds
 Hampstead, NW3

It is a horribly familiar scenario. A teenage girl goes missing on holiday. Nothing is heard for months. Then a man is caught, a confession is extracted, a trial begins. The gruesome details are splashed across the papers: the family is besieged by intruders and well-wishers. How on earth, we must all have wondered, do they cope with the waiting, the realisation of their worst fears, the public gaze, the very existence of the wrecker of their lives?

In quite different ways, of course, but Zinnie Harris's bleak little play tries to imagine the effects on one such traumatised family. It opens on the day of the dreaded knock on the door. The missing girl's younger sibling Gill is huddled in imaginary conversation with her beloved big sis. She discovers her mother Monica in a furious flurry of uncharacteristic domesticity. The truth flies out, and both tentatively begin to manoeuvre around each other's pain.

Harris catches the child's voice convincingly: the young Julia Malewski is impressively natural and direct as Gill. The mother-daughter relationship, mot-

ed in nicely observed and sometimes comic detail, also rings true. A suitably harrowed-looking Suzanne Burden, all searching eyes, nibbling teeth and fidgeting fingers, is excellent as Monica. Battling to retain her composure or simply too shocked for anger, she is tautly focused throughout.

But for all this, I remained unmoved. The script — and particularly in the sec-

ond half, set during the trial in France — fails to hang together. The problem lies mostly with the character of Monica's partner Mike. Harris never quite knows what to do with him, and neither does Mark Hadfield. He starts off compassionate; by the end, after witnessing the trial, he is hellbent on self-mutilation and almost incoherent with rage. This he directs at Monica, unable to countenance her apparent equilibrium.

You can see where Harris is going: she is trying to suggest that hearing such harrowing things breeds an irrational resentment of those who remain less soiled, and heaps heartache on tragedy by destroying one's closest relationships. But the transformation fails to make sense. So, too, with the macabre ending, which abruptly hits quite a false note of catharsis. Elsewhere Harris plausibly suggests that people in extreme circumstances react in quite unexpected ways; here her script tries too hard to invert normality, and ends up seeming merely bizarre.

NIGEL CLIFF

EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER

THE TIMES

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CHANGING TIMES

Murder on the magic floor

Despite exposure to the crushing banality of two previous plays by Bernard-Marie Koltès, I set off with some enthusiasm for this one, since many reports on its British premiere at Stratford praised the quality of his writing, and all admired the mysteriously light-sensitive floor of Jeremy Herbert's set and James Macdonald's cool, precise direction.

Koltès was inspired to write the play, in his last months before dying of an AIDS-related illness, in 1989, after seeing four photos of a handsome young killer on a wanted poster. They seemed to be pictures of four different men, and this became the germ of his hero's chameleon-like adoption of

Roberto Zucco Barbican Pit

roles and, of course, the unknowability at his inmost heart. After killing his father, he escapes from jail, strangles his mother, then stabs an inspector and shoots a teenage boy; he gives the boy's bored mother an experience to remember: he seduces a young girl and, because he is a character in a French play, his speech is either curt or madly rhapsodic. Asked what is on his mind after a fight, he replies: "I'm dreaming about the slug, and the dung-beetle."

Like Genet, and to some extent like Gide, Koltès adores the handsome killer he creates and appears to want him to be seen as a man who, unburdened by conscience, performs the dreadful deeds the rest of us dare not do. To establish his heroic status Zucco moves through a society where almost everyone else is a hypocrite, a sadist or gorging at the materialistic trough. In the riveting scene in the park where Zucco takes a woman hostage and holds a gun at her son's head, onlookers gather and discuss the situation as though it were a play. More typical are the scenes where one character delivers a lengthy speech to another who remains silent and un-

moving. This certainly contributes to the play's weird artificiality, counterpointing a crisp translation by Martin Crimp that caroms from street argot to metaphysics. Zucco, who remains a cipher, is given the requisite alienated air by Zubin Varla, moving through space as if conscious of every floating atom in it.

The acting by three of the women, Mairéad McKinley, Cathryn Bradshaw and Diana Kent, is particularly vivid, and the floor that retains for a while the shadows of bodies that have fallen upon it is fascinating. But the play itself strikes me as disagreeable and dishonest.

JEREMY KINGSTON

The keys to the political asylum

A play set on the Serbian border where Nato planes fly overhead on bombing missions cannot be faulted for being out of date. Jeremy Kingston writes: It so happens that the targets lie in Bosnia, but since Balkan history always alternates between despotism and slaughter, it is no surprise to learn that the play is supposed to be set in the year 2000. This year Kosovo, next year Macedonia: death's carousel sometimes whirls faster but never stops going round.

Hristo Boytchev is from Bulgaria, a country currently at peace, and though the war next door impinges on his characters, its battles remain offstage. Most of the play is set in the ruins of a monastery, cut off by snowdrifts and wolves at the far end of a gorge, where half a dozen mental patients live a degraded life until a disorientated UN plane deluges them with aid parcels. "The Balkans are all the same

The Colonel Bird Gate, W11

to them," one of the inmates shrewdly points out. "They were told to drop aid on the Balkans, so that's what they've done."

Combat uniforms and sky-blue berets are included in the aid, and these transform the most traumatised patient (Damian Myerscough) into a UN colonel, who in turn transforms the others into a disciplined and purposeful group, though all of them continue to be mad. Eventually the group applies to join Nato as an independent force, attaching their application to the leg of a migrating bird and scanning the winter skies for an answer.

With Nato seen as an all-providing god, what we have here is plainly an allegory for Eastern Europe's longing to join the banquet. Boytchev is not



Officer material: Damian Myerscough dons UN uniform

concerned to examine the nature of madness — the Gate's current season is called *The Idiots* — except insofar as a wish to join the West might be a disturbing symptom. So the disorganised mad behaviour at the start is something of a trial to watch.

Once the madness is canalised into Lilliputian ambition, Rupert Goold's direction creates an impressive coherence. The bird-catching scenes are

exciting, with the characters huddling together and leaning back in unison when the flocks pass above them. Adam Cork's fast, jangling music also gives a fine sense of adrenalin pounding through the system, and though the characters are seldom more than two-dimensional, the performances are vigorous, while the closing scene, in Strasbourg's cathedral square, packs a heavy satiric punch.

هكذا من الاصل

The tunesmith who made dodgers artful

In the unlikely event of a mobile phone company offering me a "one to one" with a late lamented idol, I think I would call Lionel Bart. Unambitious, I know, compared to Mr Chris Evans's desire for transcendental discourse with John Lennon (what a meeting of minds that would be), but I have career as a jobbing pianist I found myself almost permanently accompanying school productions of Bart's masterpiece, *Oliver!*. As a result I can still perform almost the entire score from memory. You don't get that from Alfred Brendel.

Anyway, during one of those interminable school shows — with the fragrance of cabbage wafting alluringly over the deputy headmistress's improbable impersonation of a Victorian tart — I leant over to the flautist (a grizzled veteran of those £20-per-week pit bands) and said: "At least Lionel Bart is making a packet out of this." Whereupon he fixed me with a look as forlorn as his trills. "Poor bugger doesn't make a penny out of *Oliver!*" he hissed. "But then, he didn't write a note of it."

This Delphic whisper, scarcely audible under the cries of "Fagin, you avaricious old skeleton!" coming from the overexcited gym master chewing the scenery, intrigued me. I found out that the flautist spoke nothing less than the literal truth, Bart had indeed naively sold the priceless rights to his magnum opus for just £15,000 — after being ruined by booze, LSD, the ghastly flop of *Twang!*, a pilfering platoon of gay pick-ups, and a short-lived but exceedingly tolerable stab at a lifestyle that made the Aga Khan look dowdy. Well, that's showbiz.

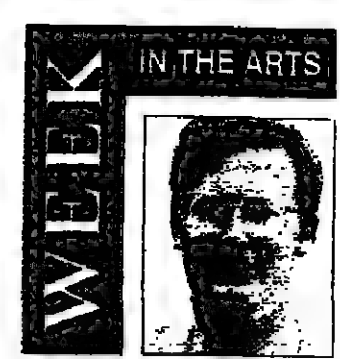
And he really didn't write a note of *Oliver!*. He couldn't write music at all. He composed by humming natty tunes to fit his snappy lyrics. The son of a Jewish tailor, he was the closest thing to Irving Berlin that Britain ever produced. But the tedious matter of supplying notation, harmony and orchestration he happily left to postdoctoral graduates grateful for pitances.

These snippets of Bart-lore fascinated me. How did he rise from East End obscurity to massive esteem, launching Cliff Richard and Tommy Steele with his whistle-some ditties, conceiving the most enduring British musical between *The Mikado* and *Cats*, dating Judy Garland, schmoozing with Princess Margaret? And why did he then fall so fast and so far?

Much later I met Bart. By then he was living over a shop in Acton. His finances were broken, but not his Cockney-lad optimism. He was, as they say in the East End, forever blowing bubbles. He had "200 new songs stashed away", he had musicals practically ready for the West End on subjects ranging from Golda Meir to Quasimodo. I

was consumed with embarrassment in the face of what I pompously assumed to be rank self-delusion, and never wrote up the interview. If Bart wondered why not, he never phoned to ask. And last Saturday he died of cancer.

So now I must enter the realms of hypothetical one-to-ones across the footlights in the theatre of mortality. What would I ask Bart if he were still here? The traits that first fascinated me about him no longer seem so peculiar. After all, pop music is full of people who can't notate their own tunes. And Bart wasn't the first showbiz celebrity to take the Hogarthian road from rags to riches to ruin, nor the last. The very bravado that makes for a successful theatre creature often leads inexorably towards nemesis.



RICHARD MORRISON

No, what I would like to know, but now never will, is whether the theory I evolved about *Oliver!* while sitting through all those school shows has any basis in fact. It is that the musical has little to do with *Oliver Twist* as Dickens wrote it, and everything to do with the East End of Bart's heyday — a weirdly amoral place of seedy glamour in which the Krays were

romanticised as modern-day Dick Turpins, and thrill-seeking showbiz swingers tripped the light fantastic down the Mile End Road to party with gangland barons.

My contention is that Bart pulled off an insouciant piece of literary subversion. After all, Dickens intended *Twist* to be a brutally moralistic tale of real life on the "cold, wet, shelterless, midnight streets" of 1830s London. He wanted to show criminals "in all their deformity". His outrage leaps from every page, even today. He consigned Fagin to the most terrifying death-cell scene in literature. His Sikes is a murderous psychopath who bludgeons his prostitute lover to death. His Beadle is a grotesque sadist.

Most of this Bart dumped. Instead he recast Dickens in an East End populated by cheeky urchins,

loveable rogues and tarts with hearts — just as Frank Loesser had immortalised the equally unlikely "honourable hoodlums" of Damon Runyan's New York ten years earlier in *Gus and Dolls*.

Bart lived to recognise the irony of what he had done by sanitising Dickens. In 1994, shortly before Cameron Mackintosh triumphantly revived *Oliver!* at the Palladium (and, to his eternal credit, voluntarily paid Bart the royalties that the composer had signed away 25 years earlier), Bart gave an almost apologetic interview. "In 1960," he claimed, "homeless people in the streets were fiction, straight out of Dickens. Now they are real again."

He certainly wasn't the century's sharpest social commentator, nor its most profound tunesmith. But he did create something that will live as long as people have voices to sing. And I know that I will possess to my dying day the peculiarly useless ability to play the score of *Oliver!* from memory. How Bart might have laughed at that, had I plucked up the nerve to tell him.



Kyle Eastwood leading his quintet at Pizza Express: it was the biopic of Charlie Parker directed by his father that lured him away from movies into jazz

Bird who flew Clint's nest

Having grown up in a house full of his father Clint's jazz records, Kyle Eastwood might reasonably have been expected to have developed an interest in the music. But it wasn't until his celebrated parent made *Bird* — a film biography of Charlie Parker — that Kyle, impressed like many before him by the dramatic life of the great alto virtuoso, decided to make his living playing jazz. Instead of following his father into film.

Listeners to Kyle Eastwood's debut album, *From There to Here*, with its stellar cast ranging from Joni Mitchell and Julia Fordham to jazz luminaries Mark Isham and Peter Erskine — not to mention arranger Vince Mendoza — might be forgiven for reserving judgment concerning the strictly jazz-based credentials of Eastwood's *film*. Certainly, anyone who heard the music alone — which ranges from material by Marvin Gaye and Tom Waits to originals by Eastwood's then pianist Matt McGuire, much of it performed by a big band — would never pick out the bassist as the leader, competent as his contributions are throughout.

JAZZ
Kyle Eastwood
Pizza Express, W1

The band under Eastwood's name currently touring Europe, however, is another matter. The music played by tenor player Eric Alexander, trumpeter Jim Rotondi, pianist Jon Regen and drummer Yoron Israel alongside Eastwood is homogeneous (a pretty straightforward take on the hard bop forever associated with Blue Note recordings of the 1950s and 1960s) and unadorned by soulful guest vocals. Even their versions of the McGuire compositions featured on the album sounded altogether snappier than their recorded manifestations, and their second-set nod to Thelouise Monk — a lively visit to *We See* — nailed their colours firmly to the mast.

Beginning with two McGuire tunes, *Watch, Watch* and *Enter Evening*, the quintet clearly looked to Rotondi and Alexander, who have been playing and recording together since the early 1990s, to

spearhead their sound, rather than being propelled — as bass-led bands such as Dave Holland's are — by Eastwood. The leader did prove, though, in taking the night's first solo, that he can plot a surefooted course through a chord sequence, and that he has a pleasingly full-bodied, earnest sound that will benefit greatly from the increased technical assurance inevitably resulting from his current live exposure in such sympathetic company.

The highlights of the evening's music were to be found mainly in passages of interplay between the deliciously tight drumming of Israel and the sly, discursive piano of Regen, but when Alexander built up a head of steam — as he did in the second set's opener, an Eastwood/McGuire composition titled *Da Da Ba Ba Nu Nu* — he demonstrated not only the big sound associated with Chicago tenors, but also a nimbleness that contrasted tellingly with Rotondi's more forthright trumpet contributions. If Eastwood's name attracts attention it is heartening that the likes of Alexander and Rotondi should benefit.

CHRIS PARKER

Cause and effect

Spirited music-making in support of a good cause made this concert special. But then not all charity galas secure the services of Vladimir Ashkenazy, who was conducting in aid of the Everyman — Action Against Male Cancer appeal, and not all such events are the result of a happy end: this was the brainchild of the double-bass player Tom Croxon, here with his Philharmonia Orchestra colleagues celebrating a victory over testicular cancer.

Optimism rules at least the beginning of *Candide*, and Bernstein's overture got the concert off to a cracking start.

Philharmonia/Ashkenazy
Festival Hall

Ashkenazy shared a crisp account, full of swagger, and the winds and percussion provided a brightness that contrasted very effectively with the warmth of the strings.

Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F is another New York composer's portrait of home. The work pulses with big-city energy, and here it received a big-hearted performance. Ashkenazy was alert and communicative, more than simply an accompanist in the ongoing dialogue between piano and orchestra. Few pianists have more feeling for the idiom than Peter Jablonski, who brought just the right blend of cheekiness and pathos to his part. The Andante was memorable for Mark David's laid-back, bluesy trumpet solos, and the finale was appropriately frantic without ever turning brash.

Similarly, Ashkenazy emphasised the lyrical beauty of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. He drew a performance rich in instrumental detail, and the woodwind solos were outstandingly played. The first movement had broad sweep, and the third poetic languor: real excitement was saved for the close, driven vigorously but never pushed too hard.

JOHN ALLISON

Young, gifted and inadequately funded

With *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* to the left and the National Youth Orchestra to the right, there wasn't a flapjack to be had at the Barbican coffee points on Wednesday. This was a seriously under-age night: with the difference being that, in the Barbican Hall, the voracious flapjack guzzlers turned out to be the ones on stage.

One hundred and fifty-two of them, no less. A year ago, they were corporately 50 years old: on Wednesday night the youngest were a pair of 14-year-old twins from Malvern, and the eldest a 19-year-old cellist from Edinburgh. It could have been any one of London's finest orchestras on a really good night. On the basis that the young do today what the hoary old professionals do tomorrow, the NYO unwittingly provided a splendid curtain-raiser to the Barbican's forthcoming festival, *St Petersburg: Romance and Revolution* in a programme of three composers associated with the city.

Flawed Finnish myth

If the *Kullervo* Symphony were by anyone other than Sibelius it would probably never be heard at all. It's long, it's expensive to perform and it's badly written. The regular anticipations of stylistic features associated with the mature composer and the rather less frequent inspirations in narrative or characterisation do not compensate for the generally undistinguished material of the work and its clumsy construction.

Even so, there was every reason to hope that Sakari Oramo, who is as ardent a champion of Sibelius as any other Finnish conductor, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, which has become thoroughly familiar with Sibelius in the recent past, would make a persuasive case for *Kullervo*. In fact, after holding the structure precariously together through the four first movements, the conductor did succeed in getting the final sec-

CONCERTS
NYO/Otaka
Barbican

First came Liadov, protégé of Mussorgsky and, by all accounts, a lazy man. He knew the things he liked, though, and his own little tableau *The Enchanted Lake*, intended for an opera he never got round to, was one of them. It was a brave way to start a concert, with the barely corporeal trappings of the strings and the veiled breathing of the woodwind inevitably having to hold their own above the clatter of programmes being noisily consulted and dropped (by the adults). The players' concentration was intense, their focus absolute.

Tadaaki Otaka, conducting, encouraged them to flex their muscle in Rachmaninov's Symphony No 3, written in exile from the St Petersburg of his student days, and surging with aching songs of a long-re-

membered homeland. Otaka milked the ardent responses of these young players, from the first bright flare of an up-beat, to the plangent Slavic song of the woodwind choir, and on to the great final Dies Irae to which the entire symphony's language and expression seem to lead — at least in a performance as tautly paced as this one.

The tour de force of another remarkable NYO evening was Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. In Ravel's high-gloss orchestration the work becomes a veritable concerto for orchestra, and Otaka ensured that there was time and space enough to reveal the intensive work done during the orchestra's Easter course by Peter Stark who prepared the programme, and by all the section coaches. The result was a thrillingly virtuosic performance by an orchestra which receives less than 2 per cent of its annual income from the State. Something wrong, surely?

HILARY FINCH

CBSO/Oramo
Birmingham

tion, *Kullervo*'s death, to fall into place as though it belongs there. There was some long-term satisfaction in that. There was some emotional interest too in the solo performances of Lilli Paasikivi, who was particularly effective in lamenting the fate of the hero's unfortunate sister, and Heikki Kilpeläinen, who was suitably sulen as *Kullervo* himself. The male voices of the CBSO Chorus, though not entirely at ease with their lines from the *Kalevala*, were energetic in moving the story along.

One of the problems with the presentation of that early score in Symphony Hall on this occasion, however, was the decision to open the concert with a masterful work from the other end of Sibel-

ius's career. Drawing on the same mythic background, though in a more generalised way, *Tapiola* is as economic as *Kullervo* is extravagant and, in less than a quarter of the time, four times as dramatic. Nothing is overstated and not one expressive gesture or nuance of colour in the orchestration is wasted.

It took a little time for Oramo and the CBSO to establish the atmosphere at the beginning of *Tapiola* but, once that was achieved, they set a standard in poetic inspiration that, for all the professional commitment deployed after the interval, they simply could not emulate in *Kullervo*. When the orchestration does not work, and when there is so much that is tediously overdrawn and embarrassingly overemphatic, there is a limit to what even the most devoted performers can achieve.

GERALD LARNER

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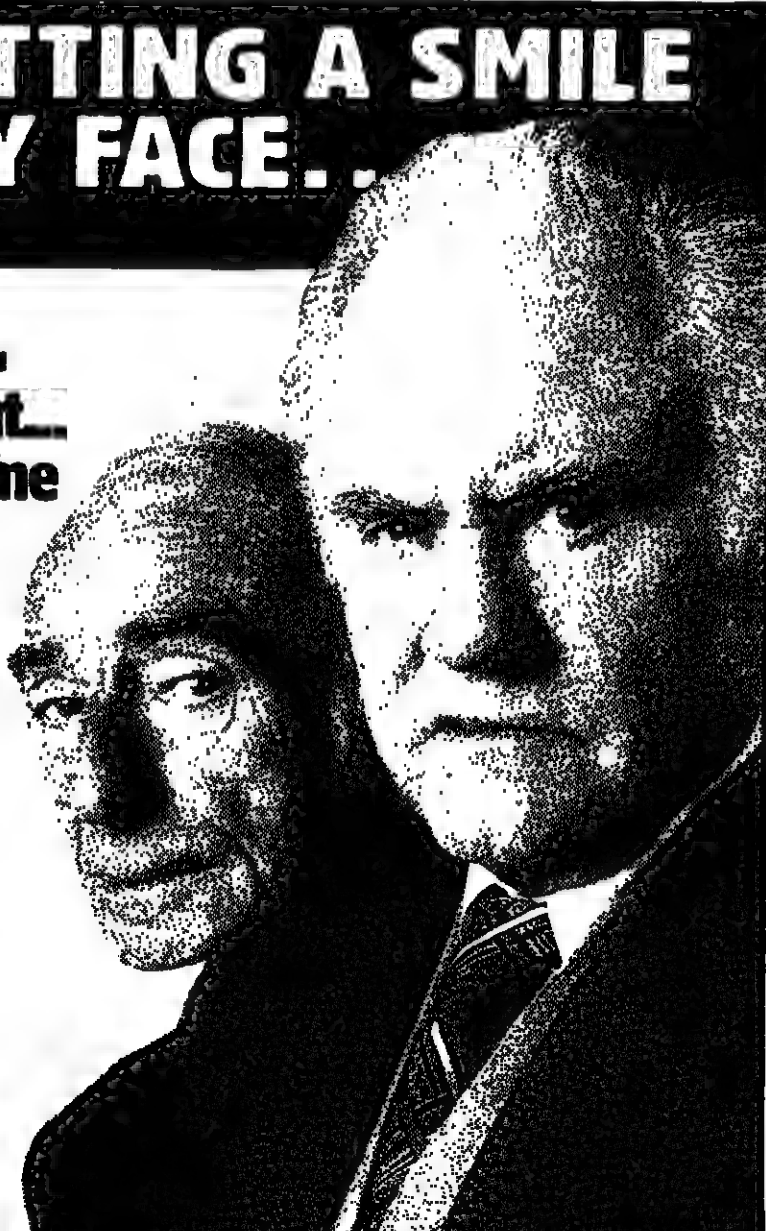
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LISTINGS

Vanity Fair on tour

ARTS

POP

The return of prog-rock

The prickly edge of prog

RECOMMENDED THIS WEEKEND

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mark Hargie

LONDON

ESCAPE FROM PTERODACTYL (15): Award-winning American musical based on the genre of early sci-fi novels, with new rock'n'roll songs from Michael Jeffrey. Pleasance Theatre (0171-602 1800). Opens tonight, 7.30pm.

ENDLESS PARADE (15): The series of post-war classical British music continues here. The highlight of an action-packed weekend is the performance tomorrow (Festival Hall, 7.30pm) by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra under Van Pascal Tortelier of Benjamin Britten's last opera *Death in Venice* with Anthony Rolle Johnson in the role of Aschenbach.

At the same time on Sunday, as part of the International Series, the Festival Hall plays host to Wagner's *Cremona*, performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir conducted by Roger Norrington. South Bank (0171-950 4242). 6.

AN EQUAL MUSIC (15): The prize-winning author William S. Burroughs reads extracts from his latest novel. A line-up of distinguished musicians headed by the pianist Joanna MacGregor play selected pieces by Haydn, Mozart, Bach, Beethoven and Schubert, set in the context of the literary work. Wigmore Hall (0171-938 2141). Tonight, 7.30pm. 6

ELSEWHERE

CHESTER: The *Chick* by Jowl adaptation of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, directed now by Deborah Shaw, with Celia White as Becky Sharp. Gateway (01244 340382). Preview from tonight, 8pm. 5

GLASGOW: The Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Chorus's



Van Pascal Tortelier conducts the BBC PO

recording of Paul Parry's *Jeune d'Arc* Mass was nominated for a Grammy Award last year. Here the orchestra returns to the work in a concert which also includes Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. James Paul conducts. Royal Concert Hall (0141-287 5511). Tomorrow, 7.30pm. 6

LIVERPOOL: The Russian conductor Gennadi Rozdchinskiy makes his debut with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in a concert featuring Shostakovich's *Symphony No 6*. The conductor shares the limelight with his wife, Viktoria Postnikova, who joins the orchestra as soloist in Mozart's *North Piano Concerto*. Philharmonic Hall (0151-703 3769). Tomorrow, 7.30pm. 6

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London
House full, returns only. Some seats available. Seats at all prices.

MAMMA MIA! Musical based on the songs of ABBA. Starring Sheridan Smith and Lisa Stansfield as mother and daughter on the eve of the girl's wedding. Playhouse Theatre (0171-447 5400).

THE GIN GAME: Dorothy Tutin and John Wood play old folk in a retirement home whose card-playing styles echo their old lives. Frith (0171-447 5400).

THE PRISONER OF SECOND AVENUE: Richard Dreyfuss and Marisa Mason make their British stage debuts in Neil Simon's play about his day as a writer. Theatre Royal, Haymarket (0171-430 8800). 6

GOOD C.P.: Taylor's best play, tracing a liberal professor's gradual descent into working with the Nazis. Charles Dance heads the cast. Michael Grandage directs. Donmar (0171-369 1733). 6

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

A CIVIL ACTION (15): A gritty courtroom drama with John Travolta and Robert Downey Jr. in a case about toxic dumping. Steven Zaillian directs.

BEDROOMS & HALLWAYS (15): Playful romantic comedy about male bonding with Simon Baker and Andy Serkis. David Leveaux directs.

NO (15): Robert Lapage's subtle, black comedy forms a psychological chain of coincidences between a Canadian actress and her bomb-making boyfriend. A teasing puzzle about politics and art.

THE FACILITY (15): Fifty sci-fi chiller with high concepts from Kevin Williamson. A faculty of school teachers get taken over by alien spirits from outer space.

SLAM (15): Saul Williams puts in a sensational performance as a black rap poet caught up in the Washington prison system. A gritty documentary-style film by Marc Levin.

HIGH ART (15): Ally Sheedy and Rachel McAdams spread loveliness and doom in an upmarket photographic magazine. Drugs, cocaine, and a fastidious Lisa Cholodenko's considered melodrama.

ORGANIZIO (15): Tube station elevators are more exciting than the Hollywood film industry. They Parker writes, directs, and stars.

CURRENT

TEA WITH MUSSOLINI (PG): Flashes of day humour. Benigni's Zeffirelli tribute to the English aristocrats who raised him in Florence before Mussolini's rise. With Maggie Smith, Joan Plowright, and Jack Doolan.

PLUNKETT & MACLEANE (15): Jake Slocum's 18th-century swashbuckler is mildly amusing if you like being mugged. With Robert Carlyle and Jeremy Llewellyn.

BLAST FROM THE PAST (12): An ingenuously funny comedy about a man (Brendan Fraser) released after 35 years in a nuclear bunker. Bill Kelly directs.

THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER (12): Directed by a Tom Swerby versus Sweeney Todd nightmare. Robert Minkoff's cinematic preacher is unforgettable. A classic 1955 fear movie.

Progressive rock, despised at home, is coining it all over Europe. Paul Sexton reports

Like Liberal Democrats on the margins of British music, Porcupine Tree are fighting to win the majority over to the principles of PR. Not proportional representation, but that great misunderstood beast called progressive rock.

A phrase that was coined as a compliment in a dreamy age of Roger Dean doodles and ELP posters on 10,000 beddit walls, has now become so pejorative that when Mansun's second album *Six* turned out to be dirty-free, their detractors gleefully hissed "prog-rock" at them. It was the verbal equivalent of chucking rotting vegetables during their guitar solos.

But beyond the cynical gaze of the fashion constabulary, Porcupine Tree have spent almost the entire decade becoming a secret British success story in European countries where you can utter the dreaded phrase without fear of deportation. Almost unknown at home, the quartet regularly play sell-out tours of Europe to four-figure-capacity venues, nurturing a fan base that many of their countrymen would love to hack into.



Stiffening their spines: Porcupine Tree — "the word 'progressive' is actually used to mean 'regressive'"

could teach us a thing or two about musical *laissez-faire*.

As Porcupine Tree prepared to play a second night for an attentive and socially diverse audience at the 2,000-capacity Palacina in Rome recently, Wilson said: "We'd only been playing as a band for six months." Wilson recalls, "and we got booked to play a show in Rome. At the time, we were playing gigs in London to 100 people. We turned up in Italy, walked on and realised we'd sold out this 1,200-seater."

The key to such European harmony lies simply in a little publicity. A Rome station, Radio Rock, got hold of an earlier Porcupine Tree album and has played them into the ground ever since. "We'd only been playing as a band for six months," Wilson recalls, "and we got booked to play a show in Rome. At the time, we were playing gigs in London to 100 people. We turned up in Italy, walked on and realised we'd sold out this 1,200-seater."

No such luck back home, where most album rock is caught in mainstream radio's exclusion zone. "Generally speaking, in Britain they don't play your stuff unless it's a single. Virgin is supposedly a rock station, but it just seems to be *Lost My Religion* and Alanis Morissette every five minutes," Wilson says.

It is a problem shared by another, uncelebrated British rock export, Delirious?, who have had even bigger sales abroad and recently achieved their third British Top 20 single, *See the Star*, but continue to be cold-shouldered here by television and radio.

tur sends a message roughly as welcoming as a cross on the door of a medieval plague house. "It has become a paradox," says Wilson. "To use the word 'progressive' actually means 'regressive'. If you look at the dictionary definition — moving forward, doing something new, whatever it says — I think we're all of those things, but unfortunately I know that 99 per cent of the times that the word is used, it's meant in the sense of 'sounds like Genesis, sounds like Marillion'."

Stupid Dream may occasionally summon the spirit of *Meddle*, may even be charged with the occasional *Nursery Cryme*, but is in essence an evocative sonic shower, largely free of the tendency to portentous twaddle of its supposed forebears. Obligated to operate as a secret society, experimental rock tends to appeal to a certain stereotype, as Wilson admits.

"The people we get through to in England tend to be the more obsessive males. We come here to Rome and we get teenage girls. It's a different vibe."

If only radio programmers bothered to open the box, they would find that *Stupid Dream* contains some enjoyable finger-food as part of the full menu, such as the elegantly harmonised *Stranger by the Minute* and *Piano Lessons*. Therein lies the fun, says Barbieri.

"If you can put experimentation into a pop song, like the Byrds or the Beach Boys did, for me that's the most interesting thing about music. It's what makes great albums," Wilson rounds off the point. "The modern equivalent would be the first Postcard album. An extraordinary sound, but still great pop songs. If you can fuse the two, that's a timeless record."

● *Stupid Dream* is available on K-Scope Records/Snapper Music. Porcupine Tree play the Foundry, Birmingham, tonight; Pavilion, Brighton, tomorrow; Boardwalk, Sheffield (16); Cotler, Bristol (23); Southampton University (24); and the Bloomsbury in London on May 10.

Mussolini with balls

CIRCUS

Juggling carries its own cyanide pill — an art form in which the highest state is to make something insanely difficult look absolutely mechanical. The cynic may say that this is why comedy is essential to juggling — it reminds the audience that you may very possibly mess up, and isn't it exciting that you do not?

Sean Gandini is regarded by many as the finest juggler in the country. His winning way with seven balls is discussed in hushed tones by students of the circus, his revolutionary integration of juggling and contemporary dance is noted over sages by critics of the flexed indolence, his ensemble performances are regarded as something of an annual highlight by those in the know. *Remembering Rastelli*, the new work from the Gandini Juggling Project at the Circus Space, Hoxton, looks at the life of

this century's greatest juggler, and parallels his life with that of Benito Mussolini. In fact it is a virtuoso display of ensemble and solo juggling conducted for the most part in an atmosphere of extreme minimalism.

There are occasional sallies into the world of entertainment, including a sprinkling of vaudeville pastiche. Members of the cast attempt to outdo each other with feats of skill and coordination, the high point of which finds one man balancing a club on his chin, a football on his ankle, another club on one finger, on the wrist of which hand a hoop is kept spinning while he juggles with the other hand. There are also episodes of ex-

quisite grace in which the company dances arm-in-arm while maintaining a flow of balls with their spare hands. But for all the skill, much of this highly choreographed work is so perfect that it becomes somewhat too mesmerising for the non-afficionado.

The Great Basofal, alias Bob Pearce, is a saggy little man in a string vest and long grubby pants. His childlike mixture of confusion and curiosity is hardly surprising given that he exists in a world where ball-point pens and clipboards fall from the sky, and where a spacecraft can be conjured from a large linoleum square and a folded sheet.

His Hoxton show takes the form of a Heath Robinsonesque journey, complete with space travel and giant birds. Since Basofal spends much of his time stranded, either in the interstellar doldrums or shipwrecked by storm, it would be fair to see his journey in the larger sense, a vision of the soul's progress through a series of lives in which the mortal body is left behind and existence is guided by a clipboard-providing life form. What, then, is life like for the Great Basofal?

Having signed his official documents, Basofal sets out on a journey, tries to fry eggs, brings up a baby

bird, throws bread around, encounters a space storm, faces up to his own mortality, grows old and climbs a ladder. It is not a particularly revolutionary vision of existence, but then Basofal is not a revolutionary clown. Perhaps it is churlish to expect a silent little man in ill-fitting trousers to provide transcendental insights into the nature of existence, but Basofal does seem to be more of a philosophical clown than a comic one, and at the very least should be able to persuade his audience to see the world as he does for a few minutes.

It is only when he gets a co-star, in the form of a papier-mâché skull, that things start to take off, and the skill in which the pair fight over the ownership of a bowler hat is probably the most successful of the whole show.

HETTIE JUDAH

OPERA & BALLET

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Ballet National de Paris
Tonight 8.30pm

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Guide to arts

LONDON

ESCAPE FROM PTERISLAND: Award-winning musical based on the sci-fi novel, with new songs from Michael J. Plassence Theatre (O) Opens tonight, 7.30pm.

ENDLESS PARADE: Post-war classical British music. The high action-packed musical performance tomorrow (7.30pm) by the BBC Orchestra under the baton of Benjamin Britten's son, Nicholas Britten, in the role of Anthea.

AN EQUAL MUSIC: Author Vikram Seth's first novel, now a distinguished musical. The piece, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, selected pieces by Bach, Beethoven and in the control of the Whymore Hall (O) Tonight, 7.30pm.

ELSEWHERE

CHESTER: The adaptation of *The Fall*, directed now with Celia White and Gateway (O) 1944.

GLASGOW: The *Spens on 5* shows that as *The Real Monty*, above, have earned David Elstein the label of tack merchant



Too tacky for words

DAVID ELSTEIN, the Channel 5 boss, fumed when he saw a draft of last week's annual performance review by the Independent Television Commission (ITC) and suggested a vital change in vocabulary. The word "tackiness", used by the ITC to describe his channel's late-night erotic drama and sex documentaries — *The Real Monty*, *Sex and Shopping* and so on — seemed to him... well, a bit tacky. But the ITC stuck with the T-word, calculating that it would ensure lip-smacking coverage.

So it did, inspiring the *Daily Mail* to name Elstein its new "Pornographer in Chief", a title that has lain vacant since Michael Grade left Channel 4 two years ago. Elstein makes the point that the *Mail* is hostile to Channel 5 because Lord Hollick's United News and Media, one of the channel's principal shareholders, owns the rival *Express*.

Channel 4 always said the *Mail*'s anti-Grade campaign boosted ratings — an effect now evident at 5, where Dawn

Airey, director of programmes, tells me it is getting calls asking: "We've heard about this tacky stuff — can you tell us where to find it?"

■ ONE reason why the ITC refused to soften its judgment on Elstein was that 5's forays into filth had already been sav-

eraged by the Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC), the busybody watchdog left over from the Thatcher years, whose meddling the ITC has long resented. By being as tough on porn as the rival quango, the ITC hopes to persuade Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, that the BSC does nothing it can't do better.

Being branded a tack mer-

chant cannot help Elstein's already slim chance of succeeding Sir John Birt as Director-General of the BBC, however strenuously he points out that late-night naughtiness was part of the Channel's original licence application. And who wrote the application? Step forward Greg Dyke, Channel 5

meets the deadline, all will be revealed in October.

■ THIS week's loss of 30 jobs at the BBC's Pebble Mill headquarters in Birmingham, coming on top of its 24 radio redundancies in Manchester last week, has chilled the heart of the corporation's staff in the English regions.

Many believe they are victims of the strategy to pump extra resources into Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the name of devolution. One small comfort: total closure of Pebble Mill seems unlikely, if only because Ranjit Sondhi, the BBC Governor responsible for the English regions, has lived in Birmingham for 30 years and can be expected to defend his patch.

■ THE unseemly set-to at last month's National Press Awards, where emotional tabloid editors complained that too many prizes went to the broadsheets, is unlikely to be repeated when the first Hugh Cudlipp Award is presented at the end of the year. For one thing the new award, initiated by the *British Journalism Review*, is restricted to tabloids. For another the sponsor, BT, has committed a mere £2,000, which rules out a lavish knees-up with a limitless supply of inflammatory substances.

Finally the prestigious judging panel — including three veteran former editors and the *Mail*'s Keith Waterhouse and Ann Leslie — is too grand and sober for fisticuffs.

■ THE Kosovo crisis has brought a welcome increase in viewers for BBC TV's much-decried 24-hour news channel. About half a million extra viewers are tuning in, taking the audience to around five million a week. Of these, more than three million are night owls who watch on their normal TV sets after BBC1 has closed down.

Most of the additional viewers, though, catch *News 24* on cable or digital, seeking a crisis update when there is no bulletin on the main channels. "At least it gives the lie to the old joke that we are only watched by three people," says a spokeswoman.

● Maggie Brown is away.



V. S. P. MEDIA DIARY

chairman and current front-runner for the BBC job. But then who said life was fair?

■ AS HE watches tomorrow's Grand National, Greg Dyke may reflect that the horse that leads early on is not often first past the post. A foreign-trained outsider whose name crops up in the betting for Director-General is Howard Stringer, president of the Sony Corporation and a former president of CBS, one of the US national TV networks.

Although he has never worked in Britain, 56-year-old Stringer comes from Wales and tells friends he would quite like to go back. Mind you, if Naithen Lad wins tomorrow for Jenny Pimman in her last National, she could become D-C on a wave of national sentiment.

■ JOURNALISTS are congenitally unable to keep secrets, which is why the shaming she-magazines that happen in every national newspaper are regularly exposed in *Private Eye* and elsewhere. So it is ambitious of Penguin to commission an anthology of insights into the trade and call it *Secrets of the Press*.

Edited by Stephen Glover, first editor of the *Independent on Sunday*, there will be chapters on killer interviews, gossip columns, getting fired, press puns and much else. Contributors include Anthony Howard, Lynn Barber, Richard Ingrams, Lyne Truss and Paul Foot. "Some of it's knockabout stuff," says Glover, "but there are some more serious pieces." If everyone

ITV viewing figures slump

A MONTH after shifting *News at Ten* to strengthen its peak schedule, ITV's share of viewing has fallen to its lowest this year, reports *Broadcast*. The network won less than 30 per cent of the total audience for the week ended April 4, compared with 36.3 per cent for the week ended March 14, when the new schedule was introduced and the quiz show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* boosted ratings. Peak-time share in the week ending April 4 was 34.7 per cent, well below the target of 39 per cent. The network has yet to find a programme to screen at 10pm that can regularly draw as many viewers as *News at Ten*.

■ IN A REMARKABLE about-turn, Bass Brewers is changing the image of Caffrey's ale and concealing its Irish identity.

Marketing Week reports that it is to be repositioned as a premium beer pitched at drinkers of up-market lagers such as Stella Artois and Beck's. The brand's new ad agency, Rose & Partners, has devised a campaign without a whiff of the old Irish nostalgia. Bass's marketing director, Mark Hunter, says: "The danger was that Caffrey's could become a brand leader in a one-brand Irish ale category."

■ A TELEVIEWED version of *The Economist*, the weekly current-affairs magazine, is to be made by the independent producer Mentorn International, says *Broadcast*. With the working title *The News Tomorrow*, the programme will include predictions and analyses of national and international news. It will be offered to broadcasters in Britain and abroad.

■ LOSS-MAKING cable channel Live TV is laying off nearly 30 per cent of its journalists in Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh in a move away from local news reporting, says *Press Gazette*.

The managing director Mark Cullen explained that research showed entertainment, sport and global events to be "more viewer-friendly" than local hard news. Two of the three daily half-hour bulletins will be dropped, and staff at the three newsdesks cut from 20 to 14. Last year the channel, owned by Mirror Group, lost £9 million.

■ HEALTH and fitness continue to be growth areas in magazine publishing. *Marketing Week* reports that Mollin Publishing, after launching the British edition of *Shape* this week, is planning to bring to Britain another American title, *Jump*, a teenage magazine with a fitness angle. Meanwhile Holland & Barrett, the health-food chain, is to launch a bi-monthly magazine, *Healthy*.

■ CHANGING FACES: Australian model Mimi MacPherson (Elle's sister) to be the new face of Foster's Formula One sponsorship.

US coffee chain Starbucks appoints Helen Benedict of Colgate Palmolive to spearhead drive into Europe (Marketing Week). James Pool to be relationship director at Delaney Fetcher Bozell. John Dean becomes creative director at Partners BDDH. Chris Dada, award-winning director of commercials, joins Academy (Campaign). Jon Molyneux, UK head of Apple Computer, to be managing director of online information service Scoot (Marketing).

■ GETTING THE BUSINESS: Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO wins account for Gillette Right Guard and Natre Plus deodorants. Davies Little Cowley Fiddes to launch European sales drive for Mills & Boon books (Campaign). Computer firm Acer appoints Leo Burnett to run £30 million global branding campaign (Marketing Week).

MICHAEL LEAPMAN

THE SUNDAY TIMES

THIS SUNDAY, WE OUT THE INCREDIBLY RICH.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

BRITAIN'S RICHEST 1,000

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

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POP ALBUMS

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EMINEM
The Slim Shady LP
(Aftermath Ent)
Interscope 490 287 £15.99

IN AMERICA, where it has already sold a million copies, *The Slim Shady LP* has prompted howls of moral indignation, not just from the usual coalition of concerned parents and ambitious politicians, but from the heart of the liberal music establishment itself. In a strongly worded article, the editor of *Billboard* has decried the violently misogynous imagery of Eminem's lyrics and solemnly urged his readers not to purchase the album by the 24-year-old rap star otherwise known as Marshall Mathers, from Detroit.

The Slim Shady LP is certainly extreme. *Guilt* plays the roles of an armed robber, a rapist and a double murderer with mischievous and explicit gusto, is typical. In '97 *Bonnie & Clyde* an even darker narrative unfolds as the song's murderous central character whispers sweet nothings to his infant daughter while disposing of the dead body of her (pregnant) mother in a lake: "There goes Mama, splashing in the water/No more fighting with Dad, no more restraining order/No more step-Dada, no more new brother/Blow a kiss-a-bye-bye, tell Mama you love her."

But the celebration of human depravity in the popular arts is nothing new. Indeed, in cinema, theatre, television drama and literature the line between humour and horror has become hopelessly blurred and the tenderly observed depiction of grotesque anti-social behaviour is now a staple theme. So why all the fuss when similarly outré subject-matter finds its way into popular music?

In the case of Eminem the answer is twofold. First, his music is so obviously and cynically pitched at children. With its classroom imagery and kids' humour, the (heavily edit-

NEW POP ALBUMS: Murder, rape, robbery — Eminem certainly trawls the cesspit, David Sinclair says

ed) single, *My Name Is*, currently at No 2 in the British chart, is cleverly designed to appeal to a pre-teen market: "Hi kids, do you like violence? (Yeah!)/Wanna see me stick nine-inch nails through each one of my eyelids?"

But the key to most of the fuss is Eminem's skill as a communicator, which, coupled with his inspired sense of musical drama, makes listening to this album as compulsive and grimly entertaining as watching a Tarantino film. Like water, truly popular music seeps everywhere, and although the attitude informing this album is ideologically indefensible, it is nevertheless pop of an exceptionally high order and thus all the more subversive. We may have heard such things before, but this time it is going to prove well-nigh impossible to ignore.

In the number *If I Had*, Eminem sets out his manifesto with a characteristically blunt turn of phrase: "If I had one wish/I'd ask for a big enough ass for the whole world to kiss". Whatever the objections, the world may well end up having to do just that.

CATATONIA
Equally Cursed And Blessed
(Blanco Y Negro 398427094 £15.99)

AS THEY stand on the brink of success on a Robbie-esque scale, Catatonia have taken pains to ensure that this, their third album, does not come laden with too much baggage from the past. Only one song, a fast, minimalist, punk anti-

them called *Storm the Palace*, unequivocally recalls their indie-rock origins, while the epic *Dazed, Beautiful and Bruised* provides a suitably brash finale.

Otherwise, the album comprises a succession of songs such as *Bulimic Beats*, *Nothing Hurts, She's a Millionaire* and the current single, *Dead from the Waist Down*, in a more subdued, easy-listening vein. The best, by a long way, is *Londonium*, a number which provides a suitably bustling chorus while discreetly signalling the group's dislike of the capital: "London never sleeps, it just sucks/The life out of me".

While Cerys Matthews remains a wonderfully characterful singer, there are times, as on the gossamer-light pop

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Making a cynical but grimly entertaining pitch straight at the pre-teens: Marshall Mathers from Detroit, aka Eminem

The folk who live on the border

THE KELTZ
The Seas Are Deep
(Lochshore CDLDD, 1279)

THE KELTZ are basically a folk trio who improvise, using reels, jigs and ballads as bases for extended explorations of the rhythmic and harmonic possibilities in traditional Celtic music.

As with Llammas, another band occupying the border area between jazz and folk, the appeal of the Keltz's acoustic sound springs largely from the textural contrast between

Paul Henderson's guitar and the various saxophones, whistles and flutes — not to mention bawzouki and bodhran — of Sean O'Rourke, all propelled by the subtly vigorous percussion of Vijay Kangukar. But, unlike the longer-established band, the Keltz have a rock-influenced side to their music.

Henderson plays guitar synth as well as delicate acoustic guitar, and the power and fluency of his solos on the instrument, as well as his light precision in accompanying roles, give an extra dimension to the trio's music. The Keltz may not appeal to diehard purists in either camp, but the less rigid aficionados of both jazz and folk should find a great deal to enjoy in this neat, airy album.

TERENCE BLANCHARD
Jazz in Film
(Sony Classical SK 60671)

BEGINNING with Alex North's theme for *A Streetcar Named Desire* and subsequently exploring scores ranging from Jerry Goldsmith's

Chinatown and André Previn's *The Subterraneans* to Duke Ellington's little-known *Dog's Racing World*, Terence Blanchard has certainly consolidated his reputation as a poised but fiery trumpeter with this, his first album for Sony Classical. He also draws elegant performances from his sidemen: saxophonists Joe Henderson and Donald Harrison, trombonist Steve Turre, and the late pianist Kenny Kirkland.

Out and out jazz fans, however, may find Blanchard's arrangements, particularly his use of strings, a little polite: his sextet visit to *Anatomy of a Murder*, for instance, has just enough Mingusian robustness to invite distinctly unflattering comparisons with the late bassist's music. Sony, though, has promised "pure improvised jazz albums" as well as such "bridges between formally composed music and jazz" from Blanchard in the future, so the move may yet bear more robust fruit than this recording, polished and undeniably pleasant as it is.

CHRIS PARKER

COMPILATION ALBUMS

DISCO music — mindless, repetitive and soulless, claimed the critics back in the 1970s. But with the release of a lavishly presented 80-track four-CD set, *The Disco Box* (Rhino 75595), you can argue that the critics got it wrong.

True, there were records which do not deserve to be disinterred — Disco Tex and the Sex-O-Lettes should have been left to boogie in peace — but others still retain vitality: Chic, for instance, with *Le Freak* and *Good Times*, the foghorn-voiced Shirley and Company on *Shame, Shame, Shame*, Candi Staton's *Young Hearts Run Free* and Rose Royce's infectious *Car Wash*. People may throw their hands up in horror at hearing Village People's YMCA again, but I bet it still packs a dancefloor.

In the decade before disco, teenagers were still dancing, but they were doing the Madison, the Watusi, the Stroll and a dozen or so other dances featured on *The Land of 1,000 Dances* (Ace CDCHD702), a

compilation of dance-craze hits. Supposedly ephemeral hits such as the Isley Brothers' *Twist and Shout*, Bob and Earl's *Harlem Shuffle* or *The Locomotion* by Little Eva have all stood the test of time.

One reason may be the skills of a group of songwriters who worked in New York's Brill Building in the late 1950s and early 1960s. On Broadway (Westside WESD216), a double-CD concentrates on three husband-and-wife songwriting teams who dominated the charts with a series of three-minute classics. Carole King and Gerry Goffin brought us the above-mentioned *Locomotion* as well as *Up on the Roof* and *I'm into Something Good*. Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann gave us *On Broadway* and *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*, while Jeff Barry and Ellie Greenwich supplied *Da Doo Ron Ron* and *Be My Baby*, most of which can be heard here.

JOHN CLARKE

Caitlin Moran is on holiday this week

THE SUNDAY TIMES
SCOTLANDTHE BIG FIGHT
NO PAY
PER VIEW.

This Saturday, the heavyweight contenders for the leadership of the Scottish Parliament go head to head in The Sunday Times — Channel Four debate, chaired by Jon Snow. This Sunday, The Sunday Times brings new NRP poll and asks who delivered Saturday's knockout blow?

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY

Alan
Freeman's
Classical Bits

A specially priced double CD and Cassette featuring Alan Freeman's Classical and Operatic favourites

Available at MEGASTORES and all other good record stores

BBC Music

Balkans war: as reporters describe their battle to get the news out, the media are criticised for toeing Nato's line



An image from the video passed to the BBC shows the body of an ethnic Albanian in the village of Velike Krusa, Kosovo. The man who filmed it hid in terror for days

Finally we had proof

Nick, it's Tony. There's someone here who says he may have something from the other side. The other side. We had been in Kukes for a week and had seen more than 200,000 women, children and elderly people fleeing from their homes into the mountains north of Albania. No one knew what was happening in Kosovo. I had heard stories of murder, executions and rape. But nothing could be confirmed. Everyone needed proof.

An hour after picking up the satellite phone and hearing this, I was driving up the mountain, at every corner passing tractors pulling trailers packed with refugees. The border post was an hour's drive from the town.

George Alagiah and a respected foreign news cameraman, Tony Fallshaw, had overheard a man saying that he had a video from Kosovo. They did not know what was on it. They had only the word of one man who had fled his home.

As always, the next deadline was approaching. George and Tony needed to get back to the room that was now our home to edit for the evening news. I told both of them to leave Sara, our translator, with the

A cheap tape smuggled out of Kosovo provided hard evidence to back the refugees' tales of Serb atrocities. The BBC's Nicholas Springgate tells how he obtained it

man and that I would go and talk to him.

At the border post more than 2,000 people were sitting on the ground. In the middle of this scene was a raised hut, with Sara standing outside. She had fled from Pristina to Macedonia, where she ended up working with us. She told me that the man was confused and wanted to tell us what he had seen so the BBC could tell the world what had happened in his village.

In the hut we found Milaim Belalica. A slim man with a pale face, he was staring past the barrier and down the dark road that led to Kosovo and the Serb border crossing. Could this man — who would have been just another face in the thousands of faces there, had he not been pointed out to me — actually have evidence of the atrocities we had all heard about? Milaim was waiting for his brother, who had the tape. His family had been separated by the Serbs on the other side of the border. Half of them were

now in Kukes and the other half, including his brother, had still not arrived. He was worried. It was getting late and he knew what the Serbs could do.

He was from the village of Krasa-S-Madhe. On March 25 Serb militia — some of whom he knew — came to the village. Milaim's birthplace. In fear of what might happen, the men had walked to meet the armed militia so that the women and children could flee.

When they realised why they had come, the men tried to escape. More than 100 had been killed, he said. The word "executed" was repeated.

He had hidden in his basement and only came out after five days. Then he was still too afraid to pick up his home video camera. After another two days, he did.

He told me this story over and over again. He produced a list that he had written of 40 of the men

whose bodies he had seen. If he was telling the truth, these would be the first pictures from Kosovo since the bombing began.

By now the camera lights that had flooded the border crossing had gone. Hours had passed. Sara was cold. Around us people were burning the boxes that had held their ration packs in order to keep warm. Milaim's brother had not appeared. I handed him a crumpled card with my name and too many telephone numbers on it, and asked him to meet me at dawn at the café where the BBC had based itself. I would be there and just wanted to know if he had the tape or not.

It was worth a try. That was what everyone said when I arrived back that night. If it did exist, the footage would be a world exclusive. Every journalist and news organisation was desperate for the first pictures from the other side.

It was not a wasted journey. I think we both smiled when we saw each other that morning. He hand-

ed me the tape. It was wrapped in a plastic bag — a small VHS-C, the kind of tape that people filmed at home in the early 1980s.

Four hours after being handed the tape, the BBC team in Kukes watched it on a monitor. At first it showed Milaim's family at home, pumping up a rubber dinghy. Then the pictures changed. We watched in silence. Seventeen bodies. All men. I noted that a number had single entry marks from the bullets. All had been shot at close range.

At 5pm on Easter Sunday the BBC broadcast the first evidence of mass murder in Kosovo. One man's act of extraordinary bravery had given us much more than a given exclusive. It gave some hope to the hundreds of thousands who had fled their homes that those who committed such acts will not escape justice.

In Milaim's words: "I have done this so that my son and grandson will never forget what the Serbs have done to the Albanian people."

The tape that was handed to me has now been given to the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

● The author is a senior producer, BBC News.

Life with the hard core

Only a few dogged war reporters remain in Belgrade's Hyatt Regency hotel, says Tom Walker

Coming from the reception desk of an international hotel, it was a peculiar answer: "I'm not sure, sir, if I'm supposed to tell you whether we're nice to journalists or not," said the Belgrade Hyatt Regency's front manager.

But these are peculiar times in the Serbian capital, and as the focus of a global press corps that is widely held responsible here for the rain of Nato projectiles, the hotel's management is on a knife edge in its relations with the Serbian and Yugoslav Governments. In terms of media relations, the Hyatt, the finest hotel in what remains of Yugoslavia, did not get off to a good start during the airstrikes. The first night of Nato's phase one is remembered by the few journalists who managed to stay inside Yugoslavia as "the night of the long knives": 30 correspondents who went on to the roof of the hotel, under the impression that they could safely watch the bombardment from there, were arrested, and several were escorted to the border the next day. Most correspondents were released after five hours in the company of the New Belgrade constabulary, and the ground rules of reporting what CNN calls "Strike against Yugoslavia" had been laid down.

Back in the relative safety of the Hyatt, plain-clothes police and security guards went round knocking on the doors of selected correspondents advising them that life outside Yugoslavia was a better option. A collective paranoia set in and the hack exodus was on. "There was this image of the knocks at the door coming up, floor by floor," said a French tabloid journalist. "But the fact is that a lot of people abandoned ship without getting the knock. Many who left Yugoslavia were never directly asked to go." The Hyatt is now the province of the hard-core war correspondents.

Up in the reGENCY suite the tales of past derring-do grow more extravagant by the brandy glass as the BBC's John Simpson, CNN's Brent Sadler, ITN's Julian Mannion and Sky's Tim Marshall fight their corners with gusto. There are some quieter, more ephemeral influences, such as *Time* magazine's Massimo Calabresi, *The Guardian's* Maggie O'Kane, and engaging mavericks such as the TV cameraman Nigel Thompson. The few Yugoslavs around tend not to last long since much of the media fare is unpalatable to them. On the night that Tony Blair came out with his glib comment about "bombing with compassion", it

was surprising that the wide-screen TV in the drawing room bar survived; many locals simply walked out. Correspondents added to the theatre by arguing over visas and fuel rationing, while Balkan smugglers passed in and out peddling their wares.

The hotel staff exacted some revenge on correspondents by holding rigorous air raid drills. On night two of the strikes journalists were dragged downstairs at least four times; the third time the sirens sounded, staff almost dragged reluctant reporters out of bed. Two floors beneath ground level, kitchen staff were told to put damp towels over their heads because a poisonous gas cloud was coming.

But the Hyatt's staff remain remarkably courteous, and are al-



Aftermath of a Nato airstrike

ways ready to give advice to the not-so-streetwise. "They told me to wear sunglasses and a baseball hat the wrong way round if I went out because I looked too foreign," says a cameraman. "That was nice of them." All the while the deprivations of war nibble at the luxurious veneer: the Italian restaurant is closed, and the hot buffet at the Avala restaurant gets steadily more meagre. Bills must be settled in cash.

There are the bizarre touches to life, such as the piped music that still includes the theme from *Top Gun*. For correspondents Belgrade is a city in weird suspense, its bridges and ministries awaiting laser-guided Armageddon, while a war and a humanitarian catastrophe, declared out of bounds by the authorities, lie hundreds of miles to the south. To non-journalists it would seem a strange world indeed: in the mornings the only sound echoing down the corridors is that of the BBC World Service — "Music to divorce to," as one correspondent a long way from home put it.

On the road to nowhere

The Serbian border guard stared at our British passports with contempt. "You are killing our children with your bombs," he said as I waited with Dossa Trevisan, the veteran *Times* correspondent, to cross the border from Hungary into Yugoslavia. My goal: to reach Belgrade to join Tom Walker, the *Times* reporter there.

We had been waiting more than an hour after being ordered to leave the minibus on which we had travelled from Budapest, watching as it left without us on its way to the Serbian capital.

Now we were alone in a room at the border post in Tompa, policed by combat-fatigued men with guns and a plentiful supply of scorn. Dossa, a diminutive 74-year-old from Serbia, was furious after being denied access to the country in which she has lived most of her life (although she has a British passport). She was trying to return as a private citizen. I as a journalist.

It transpired that our visas were not only worthless, they were a disadvantage. Two days after the Nato air strikes had begun, a coup of sorts had taken place in Belgrade. Now the names of the Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister, Vuk Draskovic, and the Information Minister, Milan Kormanec, who had authorised our visas, were mud. The military was in charge and had orders to keep us out.

So began a long, frustrating journey to nowhere. For six days Dossa and I tramped up and down the Hungarian bor-

der and backwards and forwards to Budapest after being told on a daily basis to "come back tomorrow".

The tentacles of war spread wide in their attempts to strangle the reporting of news.

Once we were allowed to travel to a cafe on the Serbian edge of no-man's land. The guard who had blamed us for being responsible for killing Serb children had undergone a character change. After discussing the war with Dossa — who reported on the Hungarian uprising and the Prague Spring — he kissed her on both cheeks then invited all of us into a warm room and gave us whisky, slivovitz and beer.

Our optimism did not last. The shift changed, our new friend departed for his home on a pig farm, and we were ordered out into the cold once more. An hour later we were given back our passports and told to go back to Hungary.

This whole exercise was not a complete waste of time, however, for we gleaned much information while travelling on the bus plying between the Yugoslav and Hungarian capitals. It enabled us to meet Serbs — travelling home from jobs abroad — who were offering to fight and women, children and the elderly who were leaving Serbia to avoid the bombs. Many were suspicious or hostile, but changed their minds after discussing their hopes and fears. They all said they thought we should have been allowed in so that we could tell the world the truth.

EVE-ANN PRENTICE

Since Vietnam, news management has been a key preoccupation of governments at war. But in today's information-rich environment the flow of news is more difficult to control. Via the Internet, you can reach both Yugoslav and Albanian reports on the crisis in Kosovo, as well as American and European news sites.

Yet politicians and Nato spokesmen persistently serve us bite-size News McNuggets, and most British people still rely on their own media to tell them what is happening. So how successful have the British media been in providing an informative account of the Kosovo crisis?

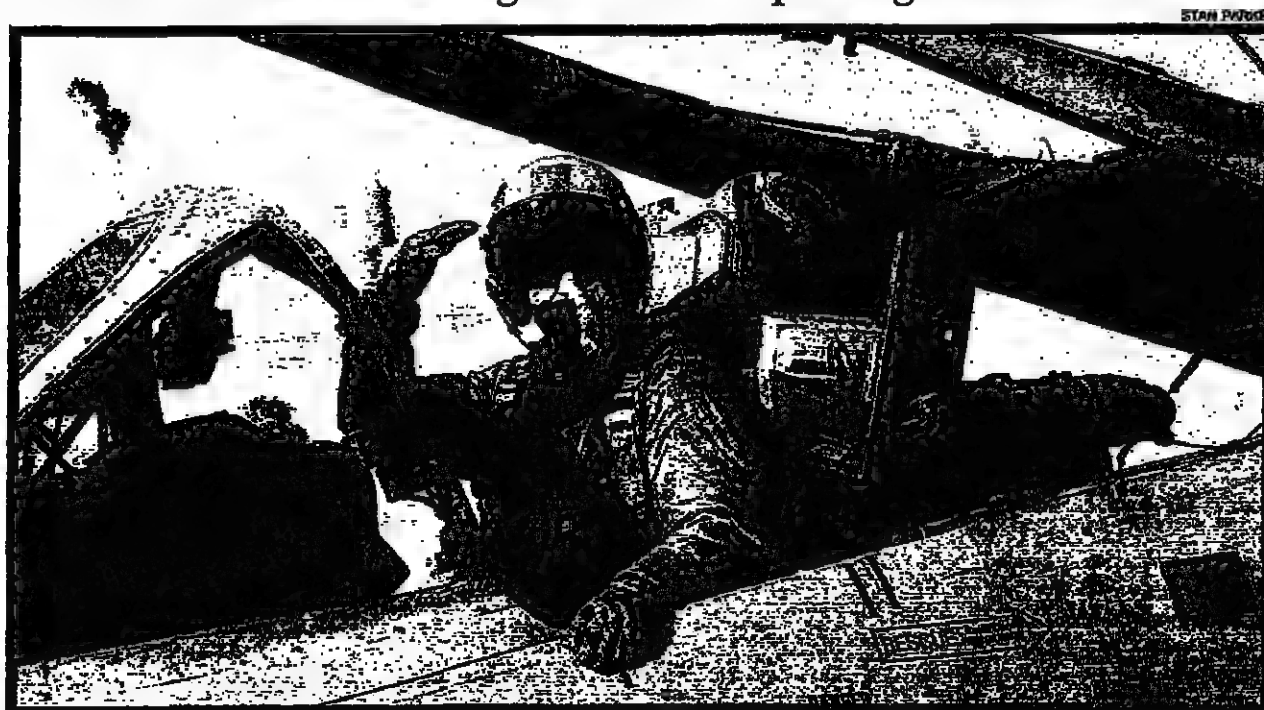
Nato's bombing campaign started when the Rambouillet negotiations broke down. Yet there has been virtually no critical analysis of why this happened. What were the objections of the Yugoslav Government, for example?

The *Boston Herald* wrote that "The deal they were told to accept, or else, involved immediate autonomy for Kosovo and a three-year transition toward unspecified goals, supervised by Nato troops." In Britain we are told that the Serbs rejected a reasonable "peace agreement". The Rambouillet accord is on the Net (www.transnational.org). Take a look and ask yourself if you can think of any sovereign state that would accept its terms.

This week, in response to an offer of negotiations from Belgrade, Nato escalated its bombing while politicians stepped up the rhetoric. George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, said that Yugoslav forces in Kosovo were "perpetrating the worst violence that some people have seen since medieval times". On Wednesday the *Evening Standard* highlighted News-

The unasked questions

Philip Hammond says reporting of the war has been strong on rhetoric and short on genuine attempts to get at the truth



"Most of what passes for 'analysis' is actually a discussion of which strategy would work best for Nato"

week's report that last October Clinton turned a deaf ear to intelligence reports that Milosevic might agree to a Nato peace-keeping force in Kosovo. Clinton, battling the Lewinsky scandal, feared committing US troops would damage him too much politically. Yet in Britain, journalists prefer to follow the official line that Yugoslavia's unilateral ceasefire was a "cynical ploy" rather than engage in discussion of the issues involved in reaching a settlement. Neither has there been

any real attempt to explain the background to the conflict. Instead, we are offered historical and religious pseudo-explanations. *The Sun* — worried, perhaps, that "white-van person" might not be immediately convinced of the necessity to "Clobber Slobba" and "Bomb, Bomb, Bomb" — provided a question-and-answer section on "the conflict that's 600 years old". Headlined "What is the war for?" the article asked: "Where is Kosovo?" "What are the different reli-

gious groups?" and "Why do they hate each other?"

A feature in *The Sunday Telegraph* presented the conflict as a latter-day Crusade by the Orthodox Church, while TV reporters describe it as a "medieval loot and pillage". Meanwhile, Charles Krauthammer, in *The Washington Post*, argues that "The reason for the killing in Kosovo is not mindless ethnic hatred but quite rational power politics." Yet it seems that new Labour would prefer us to see it as an epic bat-

tle of Good v Evil, started by a "serial ethnic cleanser".

Nor has war in Europe prompted any investigative journalism. The moderate ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova was said by Nato to be in hiding before he appeared on TV calling for a halt to the airstrikes. Perhaps British journalists are wary of accepting the Yugoslav version of events, but a French press agency interviewed him. Is there a story to be investigated there, or shall we just stick to

the latest Nato press statement on whether Rugova was black-mailed, drugged or coerced?

Similarly, after telling us that the Albanian Rambouillet negotiator, Fehmi Agani, had been executed, Nato now says his death is "unconfirmed".

Most of what passes for "analysis" is actually a discussion of which strategy would work best for Nato: air-power or ground troops. Far less attention is given to the more fundamental issue of how Nato went to war in the first place and why its aims seem to change on an almost daily basis. First we were told that the Nato bombing campaign was designed to get Milosevic to sign up to the Rambouillet accord. Then we were told that the reason was to avert a humanitarian disaster. Since no international agency declared a "humanitarian crisis" before Nato started bombing, is their mission now simply to clean up their own mess?

Are we really expected to believe that the mass exodus from Kosovo has nothing to do with Nato bombs? What about the tens of thousands of Serbian refugees — are they being "ethnically" cleansed too? How have the Kosovo Liberation Army been transformed from an organisation that the US Government classified as "terrorists" to the group on whom the peaceful future of Kosovo depends?

General Wesley Clark has announced his intention of degrading and ultimately destroying Yugoslavia's military capability. The ability of the British media to inform the public of what is happening in Yugoslavia is also in danger of being severely degraded, if not destroyed altogether.

● The author is a senior lecturer in media studies at South Bank University, London.

Pirate radio rules again

Deregulation was meant to increase listener choice and make pirates redundant, so why, asks Ben Osborne, are rebel radio stations now flourishing?

An MC blurs over the crash and splutter of the urban jungle rhythms: "Pe-nu-nut, pe-nu-nut, bah-bah-sexy." Turn the dial a millimetre and a rival station thumps out its own variety of drum 'n' bass. The combined effect wipes BBC GLR off the radio map. A notch further and Fresh is pumping out a street soul selection, and next to that another pirate is jumping between drum 'n' bass and UK garage.

Pirate radio stations are riding the airwaves with all the bravado of 18th-century buccaners. Despite the deregulation of the airwaves in 1990 and the granting of a clutch of licences to specialist stations such as Classic, Jazz, Kiss and Xfm, pirate radio has continued to proliferate and attract a considerable audience. This shouldn't be happening. Deregulation should have increased diversity and listener choice and made pirate redundant.

At the heart of the debate about pirate radio — which targets a small but dedicated audience — is the issue of listener choice, or lack of it. While the industry complains that pirates interfere with its listeners and marketplace, pirate broadcasters (euphemistically termed "radio enthusiasts") point to a business culture in commercial radio that forces stations to broadcast to the lowest common denominator. The pirates argue that deregulation has increased the number of stations owned by a few big companies that play the same material.

It's a point that legitimate broadcasters can appreciate. "Things are so regimented and play-list driven in radio these days," says Gary Crowley, a veteran radio DJ. "Pirate radio is fans playing music which isn't being catered for anywhere else — otherwise they wouldn't bother climbing up towers to stick up aerials."

Fraser Lewery, one-time radio enthusiast and former head of

music at Xfm, says: "There's a massive disenfranchised audience that needs something that only pirates provide. Regular radio is stagnating because people aren't willing to be brave; they just stick to what they know. Until the airwaves are liberalised, like they are in New Zealand, all we're going to get is a limited amount of commercial companies sticking to a tried and tested formula."

Recent attempts to break the industry mould seem to support this point. Radio stations such as Xfm and Kiss in London and Crash in Liverpool all made bold attempts to extend listener choice. All have now been turned into more mainstream stations.

Convention has it that these stations had to change because they were failing to attract an audience but this argument is not borne out by listener figures. Kiss consistently reaches a 10 per cent market share but is now being revamped under the direction of its parent company, Emap, to make it more mainstream.

Specialist shows have been moved to "graveyard" slots, playlists have been introduced and some of the original DJs, including Cold Cut, Steve Jackson and Giles Peterson, have departed. By the time Capital bought 90.1 per cent of the independent Xfm, the station (with 3.3 per cent of market share) was reaching more than half of its target listenership, which could explain why Capital was willing to pay £15 million for a large slice of the station.

The result of the watering-down of Xfm has been a loss of listeners. The most recent Rajar figures show Xfm's weekly audience dropping from a pre-take-over high of 329,000 to 244,000.

St John da Silva, a DJ for mid-Nineties pirate station Girls FM, says there is a clear connection between Kiss becoming more main-

stream and the proliferation of pirate stations.

"There are more than 20 underground garage stations in London alone," he says. "There's a gap in the market because of what's happened to Kiss. A lot of the specialist shows are missing. That's where the pirates step in. The pirates wouldn't keep going if there wasn't a demand for it."

Both Xfm and Kiss started as pirate operations. "Because pirates are not commercial, they can be a lot braver, and new genres of music tend to get represented on pirate radio before commercial stations," says Lewery. "The people who are most knowledgeable about new genres of music are DJs on pirate stations. If you look at the staffing of pirate in the Eighties, the number who are now on Radio 1 is phenomenal."

It costs £10,600 just to apply for a Greater London FM licence from the Radio Authority and a new station can expect to make at least three bids before succeeding. Once a licence has been obtained a Greater London FM station has to pay a further fee of between £65,000 and £73,000 a year. A transmitter for a pirate station costs just £400.

New Zealand, which deregulated its airwaves in the late Eighties, opted for a more accessible arrangement by making it much cheaper and easier to get a licence. It now has four times as many stations as the UK, serving a population of just 2.5 million.

The advent of digital radio in the UK means that there is potential for more stations and greater choice. "The Radio Authority needs to look carefully at how they are going to regulate digital," says Lewery.

"We don't need another 40 versions of Emap-formatted radio. Part of the authority's role is to safeguard the future of broadcasting. Handing over licences to big, successful radio companies is the wrong way to go about it."



DJ Jackson broadcasts from his bedroom in Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing*.

TV boss seeks to lift ban

The top executives of Med TV, the satellite channel broadcasting to millions of Kurds in Europe and the Middle East, will today give undertakings to the Independent Television Commission about their future behaviour.

The promises will form part of a last minute appeal to the commission by the Kurds to try to win back their broadcasting licence. The ITC suspended Med TV's licence on March 22 for repeated breaches of broadcasting rules and said it had 21 days to make representations on why the ban should not become permanent.

The broadcasts in question carried material likely to encourage or incite crime and disorder. The ITC was concerned that Kurdish extremists had been advocating attacks on tourists in Turkey.

In another broadcast the presenter sat immobile while, off camera, a member of the military wing of the Kurdistan Workers Party read out a statement in which he said Kurds should stop burning themselves (there have been a number of self-immolations) and burn Turks instead.

The members of the commission will this morning hear representations from Med TV, which is estimated to have up to 16 million viewers.

Haikmet Tabak, the managing director, said yesterday that he would give the ITC detailed promises about future behaviour. "We know we have been a headache to the ITC in the past," he acknowledged.

The ITC issued formal warnings and fined Med TV £90,000 before suspending its licence. The commission has even staged internal seminars for senior Med TV executives on the rules and regulations of British broadcasting legislation.

The ITC has the power of life or death over Med TV because its signal goes up to the Eutelsat satellite from the UK, after the programmes are put together in Brussels. The Med TV executive will tell the ITC that in future greater emphasis will be put on children's programmes, entertainment and cultural and music programmes. "I am confident we will be able to continue broadcasting," Mr Tabak said. The ITC will still take a considerable amount of convincing.

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OCTAGON

Changing the face of race reporting

Margaret Michie spent 15 years trying to ensure fair coverage of race issues. At last she sees signs of success, she tells Henry Bonsu

Last night ITV launched its flagship current affairs programme with what may go down as one of the scoops of the decade: Martin Bashir grilling the five men suspected of Britain's most notorious race murder.

That its producer, Granada, should choose this story to announce the arrival of *Tonight* shows how far the issue of race has become mainstream.

In the week of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry report, Fleet Street expended 1,672 column inches on Sir William Macpherson of Cluny's findings, and on the need for British society to change.

Since then tabloids and broadsheets have kept the momentum going, reporting on institutionalised racism in the police, schools and government departments.

For Margaret Michie, 47, who has spent 15 years of her career trying to put a positive spin on race relations, the change in the media's willingness to report such stories has been seismic. Michie has just left her job as a senior press officer at the Commission for Racial Equality to join the Portman Group, where she will be promoting the healthy consumption of alcohol.

When she joined the CRE in 1984 "passionate about creating a more just society", she found that persuading newspapers to be positive about race was an uphill struggle. Michie recalls being taken aback by the reporting of Britain's inner city riots of 1981 and 1985. What these areas had in common were social deprivation, and tensions be-

tween the police and the local black community, but this was overlooked. "The tenor of the coverage was, at one end, rightly horrified by the violent civil disorder, but on the other the press hadn't tried to understand why the riots had occurred," she says.

The media were not interested in the recommendations of the subsequent Scarman report or the later Swann report on the education of black children. "Most papers were pre-

occupied with reporting the violence of black rioters against the police. Some of the sensational language was used to depict all ethnic minority communities."

Rioting on the Broadwater Farm Estate in Tottenham in 1985, and the murder of PC Keith Blakelock, produced the headline "Kill! Kill! Kill!" in the *Daily Express* of October 8.

"Hacked to Death by Hyenas", screamed the *Daily Star*. Newspapers also ran stories linking black communities with crime in general. Two that stand out in the CRE library are the *Daily Mail's* "Black Crimes: The Alarming Figures", from May 1982, and *The Sun's* "Black Muggers blamed by Yard", "Those of us in the media office were fielding calls from the public saying that they were outraged. People were worried that these kinds of stories would not just inform the public, but change their attitude for the worse."

The number of race-related complaints to the Press Council jumped from 38 in 1984 to 82 in 1985 and averaged around 80 per year for the rest of the decade. The council rebuked the "intemperate" and



Margaret Michie, former senior press officer at the CRE, feels that more journalists are reporting positively on race issues

"sensationalised" language of many newspapers, and Lord Scarman warned editors to use responsibly the power they had to influence attitudes.

Michie, a former teacher, believed that journalists could be educated out of a tendency to use inflammatory language if they could be made to understand the wider social context of race-related stories. But it wouldn't be easy. The 1980s were the years of what she calls "a creeping style of anti-racism", which led to any pro-black, ie affirmative, action being attacked.

She also accuses newspapers of being reluctant to confirm the "racial" nature of attacks on ethnic minorities, and what the police were doing about them. For Michie and her colleagues, things be-

gan to significantly change at the end of the Eighties when the NUJ and the Press Council reviewed their codes of practice. As a result editors and journalists were instructed not to include gratuitous mention of a person's ethnic origin.

Thus, the move from the Thatcher to the Major years were characterised by a different climate in race reporting. Regular briefings with selected journalists were beginning to pay off.

In 1991 the *Daily Mail* and *The Mail on Sunday* highlighted the cases of black soldiers Stephen Anderson and Anthony Evans, who suffered racism in the Army. The publicity helped to persuade the Armed Forces to sign up in

1997 to a five-year CRE action plan to drive out racism.

Nothing prepared Michie for the *Mail's* decision two years ago to name five white youths "as the killers of Stephen Lawrence, making it a story that merited the Prime Minister's attention. "What the *Mail* did was lead the others into an area they hadn't been in before. It's one thing to put five faces on the cover, another to call for a public inquiry and another to cover it regularly, then look at its findings," she says.

This new climate has seen the CRE take some bold decisions, on occasion becoming the story itself. Last year its shock poster campaign depicting black men as muggers, rapists and orang-utans, then criticising the public for failing

to complain, attracted widespread press condemnation.

Michie says the CRE thought hard about the decision, and she makes no apology for it.

It was a sign of the CRE's confidence that in 1992 it inaugurated the forthcoming annual Race in the Media Awards (RIMA), of which Michie has taken charge. Last year's competition had twice as many categories as the first, attracting entries from radio and TV, and many national newspapers. Michie says: "When we started in 1992 the problem was to find a journalist who had written about race in an informed manner. This year the difficulty will be to make awards because so many have written and done so much about race relations."

Two cheers for digital

At last it can be said officially that digital television has got off to a respectable start. The announcement yesterday of ONdigital's first subscriber figures since the digital terrestrial channel came on air last November show a creditable performance. Naturally, journalists prodded the 110,000 total to see if there were hidden extras. But ONdigital was emphatic that the figure represented paying subscribers only, or paying subscribers plus those who had already signed their contracts and would join within days.

What's more, the number of subscribers has been accelerating month-on-month and in March 30,000 households signed up to receive more than 30 channels through conventional television airtels.

ONdigital could not resist using a little sophistry to claim that it is growing faster than Sky Digital. Of the 350,000 Sky Digital subscribers signed up in

ONdigital's first four months, only 120,000 were new customers, as opposed to those trading up from old analogue systems. Since ONdigital is for now available in only 70 per cent of the country, it could just claim that its 110,000 represented faster growth than Sky's 120,000 new subscribers.

The propaganda wars will continue to be fun, but it is significant that there are possibly 600,000 homes with digital, multichannel television, — a figure that is likely to rise to 1.5 million by the end of the year.

The arrival in June of £500 Bush television sets with embedded subscription systems, avoiding the need for separate black boxes, should provide a further boost, as will the pay-per-view film digital terrestrial service planned by SDL later this year.

It appears, on the admittedly slim evidence of the first real numbers, that a significant slice of Middle England would like more television, but not too much, and possibly not via a satellite dish. This suggests that there will be room for three competing systems and viewers can choose the package that suits them best.

News of the spread of digital terrestrial came at almost exactly the same time yesterday as Chris Smith, the Culture, Media and Sports Secretary, was launching a report examining the obstacles preventing Britain exploring more television programmes.

Ironically, the small surplus the UK once had in its television trade with the rest of the world has been tipped into deficit by the large flow of American imports needed to service our expanding cable and satellite sector.

The report highlights the old split between television as a commercial industry and a regulated, cultural product. Some of its recommendations are plainly sensible, such as

looking at incentives, including tax breaks, to encourage broadcasters and others to invest in original programme production. Likewise, something could be done about the length of programmes which do not fit the schedules of

foreign broadcasters. Things start to go awry when it is suggested that domestic regulation may be hindering exports. If the suggestion is that regulators are insisting that British broadcasters make programmes of a particular quality for the British audience and that these are not all equally popular abroad, then so be it.

M6 Television in France, for instance, rejected *Prime Suspect*, Granada's award-winning police series, because it was so realistic, dark and perverse. Is it being seriously suggested that such a programme should not be made — or at least not in that way?

Italy's Canale 5 says "television should be about entertainment and escapism", while other potential purchasers say "our programmes are 'too British'". A partial solution is already here. While more strenuous efforts are made to sell uncompromisingly British programmes abroad, there is no reason why British broadcasters should not make more programmes aimed specifically at world markets. It's what Pearson Television has been doing for years.



Raymond Jobling

BT gets in touch with E.T.

IN ADVERTISING, the most obvious ideas are often the best. The genius lies in spotting the obvious. So the understandable reaction to news that Steven Spielberg's E.T. character will be the new face of BT's advertising is — why did no one think of that before?

One reason is that BT has enjoyed huge success with its call-stimulation campaigns featuring Buzby, the animated bird; Maureen Lipman as Beatrice; and, more recently, Bob Hoskins. Hugh Laurie and other celebrities reminding us that "it's good to talk".

But "it's good to talk" had run its course. BT needed a rethink and opted to review its entire advertising arrangements, separating out tasks such as advertising to young people and business-to-business advertising and giving them to new agencies.

About Mead Vickers BDO, the agency behind "it's good to talk", managed to hold on to the lion's share of the business, however. And the idea that won the February pitch for the £60 million billing account focused on E.T. and the new slogan, "stay in touch".

No, it's not "phone home", thankfully. That would have led to endless mimicry-taking and might have been self-defeating. Instead, BT garners the benefits of the character's famous line without having to resort to such banality.

In any case, Universal Studios and Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment, with which AMV had to negotiate, would not have allowed E.T.'s image to be used if the character were actually to sell the product in the ads. Spielberg is supposed to be seeing the finished commercials (directed by Paul Weiland of *City Slickers 2* and Walker's Crisps fame) this week to check that they do not "compromise the character's integrity".

The ads will be launched this week-end with a series of "teasers" in which we see E.T. circling Earth, astonished

by some of the changes in evidence since he was last here in 1982.

A blockbuster 60-second commercial in which E.T. returns to Earth will follow next month. Weiland has created new footage to the magnificent soundtrack, amid near-ridiculous secrecy. But the gist of it is that E.T. is amazed by the changes in communications technology, and is on a mission to help people to take advantage of them — including the Internet, data transfer and multimedia.

E.T.'s suitability as a "celebrity endorser" lies not just in the "phone home" line but in his intuitive ability



Stefano Hatfield

in the original film to understand what Elliott and his sister are thinking. This is what the movie's central ad will pick up on.

But isn't E.T. rather an Eighties icon? If the thought occurs to us, it certainly will have occurred to the agency and to BT. But after exhaustive research, both concluded that the appeal of E.T. is ageless. The film may be 17 years old but even consumers too young to have seen it originally are familiar with key moments.

The ads will not be cheap — but then Maureen Lipman, Bob Hoskins

and Hugh Laurie do not come cheap either. And BT will get its money's worth from the campaign: television, posters, press ads, direct mail and educational materials will all feature the image of the finger and the "stay in touch" line. Perhaps it will be exported overseas, too. One thing is for sure: given the £50 million budget, we will all become maddeningly familiar with the idea.

■ FOR clients with shallower pockets than BT, the 60-second commercial has a limited lifespan and, thereafter, cheaper ten-second cutdowns are used in an attempt to eke out the budget — often to confusing effect.

An example of how this can backfire is the current NSPCC campaign. The idea of familiar icons, from teddy bears and Action Men to the Spice Girls and Alan Shearer, covering their eyes against a background of the malvolent things that adults say to children is one of the most powerful charity campaigns around — the more so for not showing the actual cruelty or the victims.

However, in the cut-down, all we are left with is the desperate mother screaming threats at her distressed child. "If you don't shut up, I'll..." This is a scenario familiar to almost every parent of a young child at some stage in the average week. And the threat is almost always an empty one. To tar all parents with the opprobrium deserved by, for example, the man in the longer ad who climbs into bed urging "this will just be our little secret..." seems offensive.

Overall, this is a disturbing and moving campaign. It seems a shame to alienate people who would be well disposed to its message just because of a change of context brought about by financial restraints.

● Stefano Hatfield is the Editor of Campaign.



E.T. moves to BT: why did nobody think of such a good idea before?

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Increase life energy through design. Enhance your home or office

Today, The Times offers readers a FREE online Feng Shui consultation to give a room in your home a new look. You will be given a complete Feng Shui report helping you to make the best use of your space to improve relationships, health, finances, family and career. If you re-arrange your environment according to Feng Shui principles, fans of Feng Shui claim, your life is enhanced. The offer applies to a dining room, study or bathroom.

Times readers can also have interior design advice online for other rooms in their home for £5.50 per room, half the usual price of £11.

When you go online you will be asked to use a compass to check the direction and position of the door and create the layout of your room. Describe what you can see out of each window and submit the room to an online Feng Shui expert for analysis. The analysis will highlight the negative and positive areas of your room and make recommendations for you to put your furniture and fittings in places where they will not create negative influences.

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Collect four of the seven tokens published in The Times this week. On each token there is a two-letter code. You need four, two-letter codes to access the free consultation on the Feng Shui website.

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When you have any four of the seven sets of two-letter codes, key them into your computer when asked and follow the instructions carefully. You will need a web browser Netscape 3 or above, Explorer 3 or above, or their equivalent. Full instructions are on the site. If you have difficulty downloading, please check you are following the instructions. If you are at work, make sure there is no firewall. Try again or contact your internet service provider.

Terms and Conditions: Only one free room consultation per household. Consultations for other rooms are available at half price, just £5.50 per room. Instructions for how to do this will be on the website. Offer closes at midnight Wednesday April 28, 1999.

CHANGING TIMES

Court of Appeal

Law Report April 9 1999

Court of Appeal

Council liability for acts of travellers

Lippitt and Another v South Gloucestershire Council

Before Lord Justice Evans, Lord Justice Mummery and Sir Christopher Staughton (Judgment March 31)

An occupier of land might be held liable for a nuisance where that took the form of repeated acts on the plaintiff's land committed by persons who were, in the occupier's knowledge, based on his land.

The Court of Appeal, upholding the reserved judgment allowing the appeal of the plaintiffs, Peter Richard Lippitt and Richard Terry, against the judgment of Judge Weeks QC, sitting as a judge of the High Court in the Bristol District Registry, on June 1, 1998, when he found in favour of South Gloucestershire Council, successor authority to the County Council, and dismissed the plaintiffs' claim for damages against the council for alleged nuisance caused by the plaintiffs' farm land by travellers occupying the adjacent neighbouring land, on the basis that the claim had no reasonable prospects of success.

The Court of Appeal remitted the case to Bristol District Registry for trial.

The plaintiffs, tenant farmers of about 450 acres from the Duke of Beaufort, owned land on either side of the 440 road between Bath and Stroud, claimed, inter alia, that a strip of land of about 300 yards on the eastern side of the road which was owned by the council was occupied by travellers in considerable numbers in caravans from Octo-

ber 1991 until their eviction on the council's application by court order in June 1994, that the travellers frequently trespassed on the plaintiffs' land, obstructed access to their adjacent field, dumped rubbish and left excrement on it, left their dogs, ponies and horses, stole timber, gates and fences, damaged the stone wall at its edge, permitted their dogs to chase the plaintiffs' sheep and acted belligerently towards the plaintiffs, their families, employees and neighbours and assaulted them, and that such acts damaged and diminished crops and rendered them unfit for sale or consumption.

Mr Barry Payton and Mr Philip Norman for the plaintiffs; Mr W. David Spens for the council.

LORD JUSTICE EVANS said that the judge accepted the council's submission that the claim had no prospect of success as a matter of law because of *Hussain v Lancaster City Council* (The Times May 26, 1998) 96 LGR 663, and he struck out the plaintiffs' claim as disclosing no cause of action.

His Lordship said that the claim was of activities by travellers which took place off the council's land and in all respects save one on the land of the plaintiffs themselves.

Mr Spens accepted that the one exception, the allegation that the travellers carried entry to the plaintiffs' land, could give rise to liability in nuisance because, if it occurred, there was a direct interference with the plaintiffs' use and enjoyment of their own land.

He submitted that no actionable nuisance was alleged because the activities relied on were those of independent third parties, and they took place outside the council's land.

Mr Payton submitted that such a contention had been rejected in *Attorney-General v Corke* (1933) Ch 89 and was not supported by *Hussain*.

In his Lordship's view, Mr Payton was entitled to submit that the point raised by the council was decided in *Corke* against the defendant, and subject to any defences, such liability could be established.

The council's objection that the claim could not succeed as a matter of law had to be rejected.

LORD JUSTICE MUMMERY, agreeing, added that the judge did not appreciate the scope of the plaintiffs' pleaded case or the reach of the law of nuisance.

That was not altogether surprising as the statement of claim was not as clearly drafted as it might have been, and his attention was not drawn to cases from which it appeared that an occupier of land might be held liable in nuisance in exceptional circumstances.

Those circumstances were that the plaintiffs' use and enjoyment of his rights in his land was interfered with by the continuing presence on the defendant's land of persons whose actual or apprehended activities included, to the knowledge of the defendant, harmful acts repeatedly committed by them on the plaintiffs' land from their base on land occupied by the defendant.

The cases of *Corke*, *Smith v Scott* (1973) Ch 314 provided clear authority that *Corke* was correctly decided and, more generally, that there was no rule of law which prevented the owner or occupier of land from being held liable for the tort of nuisance by reason of the activities of his licensees which took place off his land.

Further support was provided by *Thompson-Schwab v Costaki* (1986) 1 WLR 339.

In his Lordship's view, the facts alleged in *Hussain* were materially different from those in the present case.

The disturbance there complained of was a public nuisance for which the individual perpetrators could be held liable, and they were identified as individuals who lived in council property; but their conduct was not in any sense linked to, nor did it emanate from, homes where they lived.

The allegation in the present case was that the travellers were allowed to congregate on the council's land and that they used it as a base for the unlawful activities of which the plaintiffs complained.

It was at least arguable that that could give rise to liability in nuisance, and so the claim should not be struck out.

It seemed to his Lordship that upon proof of the alleged facts, and subject to any defences, such liability could be established.

Scott and Thompson-Schwab were not cited in *Hussain*.

The latter case was concerned with a landlord. He was held not to be liable in nuisance for the activities of his tenant which did not involve use of the land leased by him to the tenant.

There was nothing in that case which precluded a court from holding that an occupier of land might be held liable for a nuisance which consisted of a continuing state of affairs existing on his land where that nuisance manifested itself in the form of repeated acts on the plaintiff's land, and those acts were, to the knowledge of the occupier, committed by persons based on his land and they interfered with the plaintiff's use and enjoyment of his land.

It was reasonably arguable that the continuing presence of the travellers on the council's land constituted a nuisance to the plaintiffs' use and enjoyment of their rights in their land, even though the travellers' activities involved using the council's land as a launching pad for repeated acts of trespass on the plaintiffs' land.

In the circumstances the case was reasonably arguable in law and on the state of the pleadings, and the judge should not have struck out the claim.

Sir Christopher Staughton gave a judgment agreeing that the appeal should be allowed.

Solicitors: Moger & Sparrow, Bath; Mr Eric J. Andrews, Thornbury.

Application was not a step in the proceedings

Patel v Patel

Before Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Otton and Lord Justice Ward (Judgment March 24)

A defendant who applied for a default judgment to be set aside and for leave to defend and counterclaim had not taken any step in the proceedings to answer the substantive claim so as to prevent him being granted a stay of the action in favour of arbitration pursuant to section 9 of the Arbitration Act 1996.

The Court of Appeal so held in allowing the appeal of the defendant, Dilesh R. Patel, against the dismissal by Judge Wilson, sitting on official referee's business on October 16, 1998, of his summons to stay the action of the plaintiff, Shendra Bhallaibhai Patel, for breach of a building contract in favour of arbitration pursuant to section 9 of the 1996 Act.

Section 9 of the 1996 Act provides: "3) An application [for a stay] may not be made by a person ... after he has taken any step in those proceedings to answer the substantive claim."

Mr Mark Rosedale for the defendant; Mr Adam Chambers for the plaintiff.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS said that the point raised on the appeal had regularly given rise to problems under the Arbitration Act 1950. However, the language of section 9(3) of the 1996 Act was different from that in section 4(1) of the 1950 Act.

The issue was whether the application for a stay of the plaintiff's action had been made by the defendant before or after he had taken any step in those proceedings to answer the substantive claim.

The plaintiff had issued a writ endorsed with a statement of claim

seeking damages from the defendant for breach of a building contract.

The defendant had acknowledged service and endorsed the acknowledgment with a statement of intention to defend the action. Section 9(3) required the defendant to take that step before applying to stay an action.

The plaintiff had then issued a default judgment, there having been no defence served.

The defendant had issued a summons seeking an order (i) that the default judgment be set aside and that he be given leave to defend and counterclaim and (ii) that consequential directions be given.

The judge had taken the view that because of the terms of the summons, and, in particular, because the defendant had asked to be given leave to defend the action and counterclaim, the defendant had taken a step in the proceedings to answer the substantive claim.

The question was whether the judge had been right to come to that conclusion.

The defendant had drawn attention to the fact that the long title of the 1996 Act indicated that it was an Act to restate and improve the law of arbitration; it was not merely a consolidating Act.

His Lordship accepted that the 1996 Act was meant to make the law of arbitration clearer and less technical than it had been hitherto. The underlying spirit of the Act was very much in accord with the new Civil Procedure Rules which were to apply in the civil courts from April 26, 1999.

Therefore, the starting point should be to approach the language of section 9(3) by applying its actual words and asking whether the defendant had taken any step to answer the substantive claim. Everything turned on the language of the summons.

The fact that the defendant had applied to set aside the default judgment could not be of any assistance to the plaintiff.

Unless such an application had been made there would have been nothing to stay. Therefore, if the defendant had merely asked for the default judgment to be set aside he would undoubtedly have been entitled to a stay.

But the defendant had asked for leave to defend the action and counterclaim. The plaintiff had said that that was a clear indication that he was going to defend the action and counterclaim.

His Lordship recognised the force of that submission. However, the fact was that the defendant did not need leave to defend and counterclaim; he was entitled to do so once the default judgment had been set aside, that was in fact one of the relief that he needed.

He had also asked for consequential directions but that was ambivalent. One direction could have been for a stay. There was no sign of evasion in that request.

Therefore the appeal turned on whether, by asking for something other than the relief that he needed, the defendant was to be deprived of his right under the Act to a stay.

It seemed to his Lordship that if the mere inclusion of something other than a summons of this sort deprived the defendant of his right under the Act to a stay that would be inconsistent with the spirit of the Act.

His Lordship would allow the appeal and grant the defendant a stay of the action.

Lord Justice Otton gave a concurring judgment and Lord Justice Ward agreed.

Solicitors: Manis, Thornton Heath; Myers Ebner & Deamer Hammersmith.

Oral agreement for sub-tenancy valid as assignment

Part (Battersea) Ltd (in administrative receivership) and Another v Hutchinson

Before Mr Justice Moore-Bick (Judgment March 18)

By section 83(1)(a) of the Law of Property Act 1925 the disposal of an interest in land by operation of law need not be by writing. Accordingly, a valid oral agreement for the creation of a sub-tenancy for a period not less than the remaining term of the lease under which the grantor himself held, took effect as an assignment of the remainder of the grantor's term.

Mr Justice Moore-Bick, sitting as an additional judge of the Chancery Division, so held in a reserved judgment handed down in chambers, allowing the appeal of the plaintiffs, Part Battersea Ltd and Moorcroft Holdings Ltd, both in administrative receivership, from the decision by Master Munster of November 17, 1998 of their application for summary judgment subject to the determination of the preliminary issues of law.

By an oral agreement made on December 8, 1997 Monarun sublet part of that land to the defendant at a rent of £300 a month. The defendant entered into occupation on December 18.

When Monarun's lease expired by effluxion of time the plaintiffs sought to take possession of the property. The plaintiffs discovered that Mr Hutchinson was in occupation of part of the land.

Furthermore, Mr Hutchinson claimed that he was entitled to remain in occupation because Monarun had granted him a monthly

periodic tenancy which was protected under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.

While a sub-tenancy in favour of Mr Hutchinson, even if granted in breach of the terms of the headlease, was capable of falling within the terms of the 1954 Act (see *D'Silva v Lister House Development Ltd* (1997) 1 Ch 17), Mr Dutton submitted that the grant of a sub-lease for a period not less than the remaining term of the lease under which the grantor himself held took effect not as a sub-lease but as an assignment of the remainder of the grantor's term.

In *Milmo v Carreras* (1944) 1 KB 306, 310 applied by Lord Justice Slade in *Trustees of Henry Smith's Charity v Wilson* (1983) 1 QB 316 and by Lord Justice Ralph Gibson in *Groveview Estate Belgrave v Crofton* (1992) ECLR 53, 54, Lord Greene, Master of the Rolls, said:

"Where a lessee, by a document in the form of a sub-lease, divests himself of everything that he has got (which he must necessarily do if he is transferring to his so-called sub-lessee an estate as great as, or purporting to be greater than, his own) he from that moment on is a stranger to the land. In the sense that the relationship of landlord

and tenant cannot exist any longer between him and the so-called sub-lessee."

If those authorities covered the present case, there could be no answer to the plaintiffs' claim for possession of the property, because by virtue of the assignment Mr Hutchinson received only an unprotected lease; see *St Giles Hotel Ltd v Microcrown Technology Ltd* (1997) 2 EGLR 105.

Mr Jeffries sought to distinguish those cases on the basis that a valid oral agreement for a sub-tenancy extending for the whole of the remainder of the term could not operate as an assignment of the grantor's term because it was not possible to assign a term other than by a written instrument.

Accordingly such an agreement was of no effect in law, and Mr Hutchinson became a monthly periodic tenant by virtue of entering into possession and making payment of rent.

A person seeking to assign a lease must generally either execute an assignment in the form of a deed, in which case the instrument will be capable of transferring a legal estate by operation of section 52 of the 1925 Act, or he must execute a written instrument which can be construed as an enforceable con-

tract to assign the lease which satisfies the requirements of section 53, and now also section 2 of the Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989.

Mr Dutton submitted that the grant of an oral tenancy for a period which exceeded the remainder of the grantor's term could assign a lease as an assignment by operation of law, an exception to the requirement that such interests might only be disposed of in writing found within section 53(1)(a) of the 1925 Act.

In *Milmo v Carreras* it was only the operation of the rule of law which the court recognised and applied which enabled the conveyance represented by the oral tenancy agreement to take effect without being under seal.

In the present case Monarun did not seek to assign its term to Mr Hutchinson. The agreement was incapable of creating an effective sub-tenancy because Monarun had no reversion, and there was no privity of estate between them.

If the agreement had any effect at all it could only be as an assignment of Monarun's term, but that could only occur by operation of law, that is, the rule in *Milmo v Carreras*.

Section 53(1)(a) was therefore apt to cover the position where an oral transaction which would otherwise be effective in accordance with its terms took effect by operation of law in a manner different from that contemplated by the parties.

It was not anomalous for the assignment of a lease, which would ordinarily require writing, could be effected orally in that way as an assignment by operation of law in limited circumstances. It was no more anomalous than the fact that an agreement for a short lease could also be made orally.

Solicitors: Cameron McKenna; Payne Hicks Beach.

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Solicitors: Cameron McKenna; Payne Hicks Beach.

Smyth v Behbehani and Others

Before Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice Ward and Lord Justice Sedley (Judgment March 11)

In a dispute where legal proceedings were in progress in a foreign country, the English court had to proceed with great caution before granting relief to one of the parties in the form of a negative declaration of non-liability. The court had to ensure that a claimant was not seeking to gain procedural advantage of an illegitimate nature.

But the English court could make such a declaration in circumstances where it was satisfied that to do so would be of procedural advantage both to the claimant and to the interests of justice.

The Court of Appeal so held dismissing an interlocutory appeal by the first defendant, Abdul Majeed Saeed Behbehani, from the refusal by Mr Ian Hunter, QC, sitting as a deputy judge of the Chancery Division on May 22, 1998, of a stay of an action brought in England by the plaintiff, Naz Smyth, against Mr Behbehani, Maha Abdul Majeed Behbehani and Philip Ross & Co.

Miss Barbara Dohmann, QC and Miss Monica Carr-Frisk for the first defendant; Mr Roger Ellis

QC and Mr Robert Lamb for the plaintiff.

LORD JUSTICE NOURSE said that the plaintiff was a British citizen. The first defendant was a Kuwaiti national resident in Kuwait.

In 1996 he issued proceedings in Sharjah asserting rights to repayment of three transfers of money from the plaintiff. In April 1998 the court in Sharjah held that it had jurisdiction to hear part only of that claim.

The plaintiff, who challenged the jurisdiction of the Sharjah court, issued her writ claiming a negative declaration to the effect that she was not liable to repay any of the sums transferred.

The judge found that there was an important procedural advantage to the plaintiff in having all the transfers examined by a single court and that the most appropriate forum for that was the English court even though proceedings continued in Sharjah in relation to one of the transfers.

After referring to *Saipem SpA v Drilling 132 BV* (The *Volturno* (1988) 2 Lloyd's Rep 361), *Canilla Cotton Oil Co v Granauder SA* (1970) 2 Lloyd's Rep 10 and *Union Bank of Switzerland* (1990) 1 Lloyd's Rep 32, the judge reminded himself that the English courts

proceeded with great caution where the principal or only claim was for a negative declaration because, he said, claims were often brought to gain procedural advantage of an illegitimate nature.

But he added, there were cases where a claim for a negative declaration made very good sense and that was the case here.

Not only was the judge entitled to take the view that there was an important procedural advantage to the plaintiff in the course he proposed, there was also an important advantage to the interests of justice.

It was in the interests of justice that proceedings in relation to comparable transactions should all be tried at one and the same time.

Bearing in mind the actual circumstances in which the judge had to make his decision, namely that this was not an application to strike out, but an application for a stay on the ground of forum non conveniens, the judge was entitled to hold that the claim for a negative declaration did not dislodge the plaintiff from pursuing her proceedings in this country.

Lord Justice Ward and Lord Justice Sedley gave concurring judgments.

Solicitors: Kingsley Napley; Soekias & Soekias.



Win a cottage in Cornwall

Today, The Times, in association with the Virgin One account, offers readers the chance to win a lovely cottage in the typical Cornish village of Perranwell Station, Smiddy Cottage, with its two bedrooms and pretty garden, is the ideal holiday home. Close to Truro and an 18-hole golf course, our prize cottage will provide the lucky winner with the perfect place from which to watch the eclipse of the sun on August 11.



Perfect for sightseeing: Trellisick Gardens, Falmouth harbour

HOW TO ENTER Collect 12 Times tokens and two tokens from The Sunday Times and attach them to an entry form which appears again on Tuesday. Tokens will appear up to April 18 and a bonus token is published every Friday, see below. The winner will be chosen at random from all entries received by Friday, April 30, 1999. Normal Times Newspapers prize draw rules apply. The terms and conditions will appear again tomorrow.



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Adverse inference from refusal

F v Child Support Agency

Before Mr Justice Scott Baker (Judgment March 23)

An adverse inference drawn from a refusal to provide a blood sample in accordance with a court order could be used to rebut a presumption of legitimacy.

Mr Justice Scott Baker so held in the Queen's Bench Division when dismissing an appeal by way of case stated by F against the decision of the Birmingham Family Proceedings Court on April 27, 1998 to allow an application by the Child Support Agency for a declaration of parentage under section 27 of the Child Support Act 1991 that F was the father of a child, B, born to P.

Miss Rosalind Bush for F; the agency did not appear and was not represented.

MR JUSTICE SCOTT BAKER said that F had unprotected sexual relations with P when P was married to another man and P later gave birth to a child, B.

The court admitted under the Children Act 1989 evidence of hearsay evidence from P as to the contents of a report of a DNA test made three years previously which said had excluded her husband from being the father of B.

F refused to comply with the directions of the court to provide a test blood sample. His Lordship said that F gave no justifiable explanation for refusing to provide a sample and the court was entitled to draw adverse inferences against him.

It was plain that even where the presumption of legitimacy existed, a putative father declined to give blood at his peril when ordered to do so by the court.

The justices were entitled to find that the presumption of legitimacy of B arising from P's marriage was rebutted by her hearsay evidence as to the DNA test and the adverse inference drawn from F's refusal to provide a sample, and accordingly that F was the father of B.

Solicitors: Fentons, Sullivan.

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THE TIMES
EDUCATIONReal-life
lesson in
drugs

Teenagers are tuning into a BBC docusoap. Hannah Betts reports

The BBC's latest docusoap, *Jailbirds* — set in New Hall Prison, Wakefield, West Yorkshire — has come as a gift for teachers who want to incorporate real-life stories into their school's drug-prevention programmes. Melissa Meredith, 18, who is a former heroin addict and one of the series' participants, has turned out to be a powerful negative role model.

When the programme showed her arrival in prison, it became clear that her morning heroin hit was not the only reason she greeted her surroundings with incomprehension: Melissa is from what is termed "a good home" and her parents believe that peer pressure led to her addiction. Her transition, from an ambitious girl who had been expected to do well in nine GCSEs at her local secondary school to a prisoner, took only 12 months. Drug addiction changed Melissa into a jailbird, something that neither her parents nor she had expected.

Chris Terrill, the creator of *Jailbirds*, aims to make socially responsive programmes, but he fell on this particular by-product of the series almost by accident, during a talk about his career to sixth-formers at Brighton College, an independent school.

"As soon as I began showing *Jailbirds*, the group was on the edge of its seat," Mr Terrill explains. "I spent five years as a teacher, so I'm very aware of young people's huge hunger for facts at that age."

The experience at Brighton is just the tip of the iceberg. In *Jailbirds*' first week on air, the programme's helpline received 150 calls. After Melissa's story was broadcast, 4,000 people, mostly young, phoned about drugs.

Mr Terrill sees this as a testament to the docusoap aesthetic, show don't judge. "Traditionally, the drugs message is given a preachy approach that

can be a turn-off to more rebellious youngsters. We wanted to do something different."

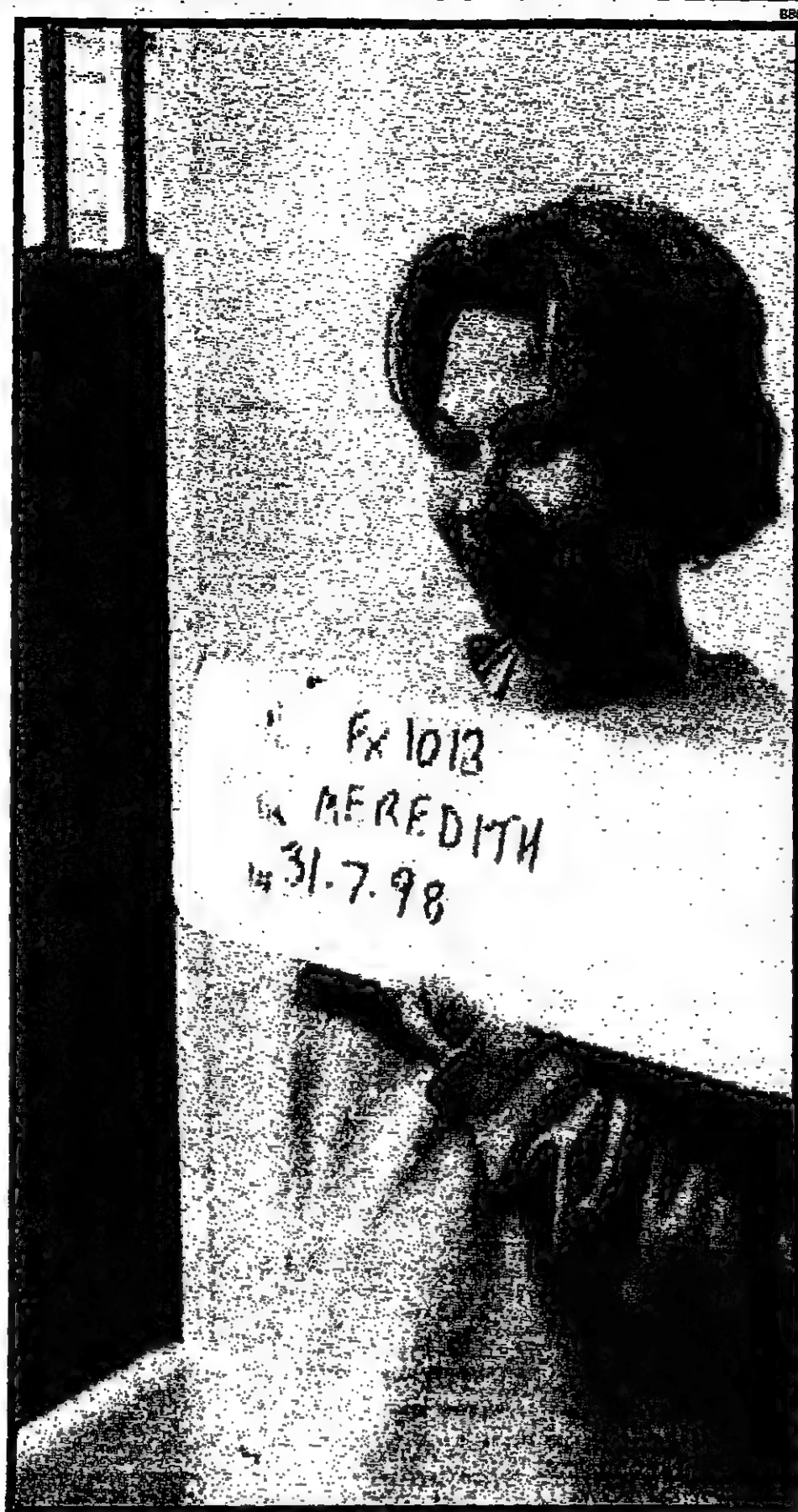
Anthony Seldon, Headmaster of Brighton College, endorses the approach. "Kids need deterrents, but are bored by policemen holding up banned packages. This series plays to a different part of their psyche, appealing to their emotions."

Brighton College has never adopted a head-in-the-sand attitude towards drugs. A visit from Leah Betts's father last term demonstrated to students that drugs can be the cause of an untimely death, but before *Jailbirds*, few had appreciated the devastating effects drugs can have on one's life.

Mr Seldon says: "It's not just that they say this isn't a middle-class thing. Young people use every reason they can to claim that they won't be affected, that it's about northerners or southerners: teenagers' skills of projection rarely extend to seeing the potential impact on the people who care about them most: their parents. Children don't think of the parental point of view. They need to be made to think from this perspective. Seeing Melissa's parents weeping at home shocked the youngsters into some sort of realisation."

If evidence were needed of the unglamorous reality of the post-docusoap lives of the *Jailbirds* stars, it is the Easter holiday that Melissa has just passed at home. Trying to kick her habit for the seventh time in as many months, she was confined to the house, continually watched over by her parents.

Eight months after the series was made, Bob Meredith, Melissa's father and a construction company general foreman in Barton-upon-Humber, says: "My wife and I have come close to cracking up. We did the programme as a deterrent to other children. Ultimately, if Melissa can get her act together, I'd like her to go



Bob Meredith: "Melissa's a likeable girl and I think she could really influence teenagers"

into schools to tell kids how dangerous drugs are."

Now off heroin, Melissa is accepting her celebrity status. Whether or not she turns apostle, it is Melissa's own words that offer the most powerful message of this modern moral-

ity tale of *Jailbirds*: "If you're on it, get off it, because you will end up the same."

"You'll think I wouldn't ever end up in jail, or robbing; but you will. It just turns you bad. Bad. Lower than low."

● E-mail: edpage@the-times.co.uk

Still time to avert
strike chaos

One astounding fact stood out from the hundreds of debates, fringe meetings and briefings that have taken place in the fortnight of classroom union conferences, which ends today. It was the revelation to a disbelieving press corps that the National Union of Teachers had not held a national strike for 30 years. Had our ears been deceiving us as we endured Easter after Easter of sub-thumping? Perhaps: it appears that the annual seaside spectacle, which a rival union leader once said caused teachers to switch off news bulletins in embarrassment, last resulted in a one-day strike in 1969. There have been boycotts, work-to-rules and co-ordinated local strikes, but the threats of "classroom chaos" that punctuate every NUT conference have somehow never materialised.

One reason is the union's tightly framed rulebook, which enables the comparatively moderate leadership to block most calls to the barricades. Demands for action that pass this hurdle face the need for a two-thirds majority of eligible voters (not just those voting) if there is any question of members making claims on the quaintly named "sustenance fund".

It takes rare unanimity from the NUT's perpetually warring political factions, and genuine feeling among the 190,000 members, to turn conference rhetoric into militant practice.

Might the issue of performance-related pay create such conditions? It appears so, when even the more moderate Association of Teachers and Lecturers is prepared to contemplate industrial action and the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers is keeping this weapon in reserve in case negotiation fails. The NUT leadership is behind the call for a strike, rather than trying to frustrate militant opponents, and conference delegates of all political shades were determined to make a stand against the Government's proposals.

Should parents, in that case, prepare themselves for a summer — and even an autumn — of disruption to school life? Probably not, for a number of reasons. The NUT's ordinary members, predominantly in primary schools, will be harder to convince than the conference firebrands that strike action will "force" the Government to come up with £3,000 pay rises all round. The other unions are upping the ante in the hope of weakening the link between pay and pupils' results, but they are a long way from strike action.

Even the NUT is proposing only a one-day

strike next term. Public examinations will not be affected, although the union could decide to target national curriculum tests, which they have always resented. Sustained strike action — if it comes at all — is likely to be in the autumn, but that presupposes that feelings will still be running as high after the long summer holiday, when the scheme may have been amended.

However, it would be a mistake for the politicians to believe that opposition to their current proposals is confined to those whose idea of an enjoyable Easter is a rerun of the debates they held the previous year. Head teachers, for example, are rightly concerned that annual appraisal of all their staff will take up an inordinate amount of time, while the Institute of Personnel and Development has warned against using the same process for career development and salary purposes.

The real obstacle to agreement with the teachers, however, is their fear of payment by results. The NUT is particularly vehement on the subject because the whole history of the union is bound up with resistance to the Victorian system, which divided schools and saw teachers evicted from tied cottages. Ministers are yet to convince classroom practitioners that their scheme bears no resemblance to its 19th-century predecessor, although anyone who has examined the detail of

their proposals should have no doubt. Pupils' results will be only one element of performance and schools will be able to set the targets they choose, taking account of the prior achievement of each class.

To some extent David Blunkett and his colleagues have been hoist with their own petard in trying to spell out every stage of the process. Head teachers should have as much flexibility as possible to see that the best teachers are rewarded, and the Government's understandable insistence on "something for something" should not mean the loading of additional and possibly unnecessary responsibilities on to those who seek recognition. The main purpose of the exercise is to keep the best teachers in the classroom, not to divert them into extraneous activities.

Once teachers are convinced that this will be the outcome, the spectre of prolonged industrial action will surely recede. Even those with doubts about the scheme will recognise that government offers of £1 billion do not come around very often and, in the real world, are hardly likely to come with no strings attached.



John O'Leary

Why girls seem smarter

How you learn depends on gender, says Tony Mooney

Girls are so far ahead in the academic battle of the sexes that boys have become an educational underclass. The conventional explanation when boys did better than girls in mathematics and science, and roles were reversed with languages, was that differences in brain function were responsible: male brains were thought to be built in a way that allowed them to perform better in tests that asked them to imagine objects three-dimensionally in space, while girls had natural linguistic abilities.

Many researchers doubted the brain-function theories, arguing that male superiority in spatial-ability tests came from stereotyped behaviour in children's play. Children who engaged in "masculine" play with toy bricks, trucks and trains were more likely to develop spatial abilities than those who engaged in "feminine" games with dolls and role play. Feminine play led to higher verbal skills.

One experiment led to the promotion of another theory. A spatial-ability test was presented in a game format that involved moving characters around a screen. Boys outperformed girls when the characters were named "pirates" but when they were called "honey bears", the girls reached the same level as the boys.

Recent work at Greenwich University by Mark Brosnan has shed more light. Using spatial-ability tests with 35 male and 49 female students from two sixth-form colleges, Dr Brosnan found that the performance of the girls depended on how the tests were introduced. When a test's spatial nature was emphasised, the girls performed worse than the boys. But there was no difference in performance when the tests were introduced as being designed to identify individuals who were good at understanding other people's problems by isolating central issues.

As the idea of gender differences in mental capacities has begun to lose credibility, researchers have focused on the different ways in which the sexes learn. Research can be contradictory, but an analysis of 22 studies around the world has found some common strands and suggested that there are some clear gender differences in the learning process.

A study at the University of Amsterdam suggests that women have more of a "surface approach" to learning than men: they are more inclined to commit learning to memory. Though the researchers do not make the link, because schools still emphasise the ability to memorise, this could



Fear of failure is a factor that can improve the learning capabilities of girls

be one explanation for the success of girls.

Teachers play a particularly important role in female learning because girls tend to want tasks defined in more detail than boys do. Such an approach is likely to appeal to a teacher's feeling of self-importance and to meet a favourable response, which is encouraging to girls. The emphasis teachers place on the consequences of academic failure is another advantage to girls in school. The Dutch academics also found that fear of failure was a factor that improved the learning capabilities of girls. Boys seem to have a more cavalier attitude to learning.

A study at Lancaster, Durham and Sheffield universities and London University's Institute of Education also identified moti-

national reasons behind girls' superior performance. Using data on almost 1,200 children in two comprehensives, the researchers found that girls are more "task-orientated" than boys: they gain satisfaction from developing their understanding of the work they are doing. Boys are more "ego-orientated": they gain satisfaction from their studies through performing better, or at least, no worse than others.

Teachers will need to devise ways of introducing competition into the learning process to meet the needs of boys without alienating the girls. At secondary level schools need to note that boys are more interested in gaining qualifications than in the intrinsic value of courses.

● The author is a former head teacher.

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TENNIS

Lloyd puts Davis Cup job on line

By ALIX RAMSAY, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT

NEVER has there been quite such a wiping of brows, a clearing of throats or a sucking of teeth as at the draw for the Davis Cup world group relegation play-offs yesterday. Despite all the efforts of Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski over the Easter weekend, Great Britain lost their tie with the United States and therefore have just one more chance to stay in the world group. So when South Africa were pulled out of the hat, at home, there was relief all round.

There were several nations lying in wait for Britain, all of whom could have made life difficult. The thought of playing Chile away on clay after the

Henman taking the honours last time in Stockholm in November, but Rusedski has beaten Ferreira in their past three meetings, most recently at the US Open last year.

Not that Lloyd, Henman or Rusedski were anywhere to be seen. They have all gone their separate ways in search of sun and relaxation. From the beach in Barbados, Lloyd was as optimistic as ever.

"South Africa have a good team, they are tough cookies," he said. "Ferreira can be a great player but on a bad day he can be awful. After last weekend, to have a home tie is terrific and it will be fantastic for the fans, but for me it is an absolutely vital match. We cannot afford to lose the momentum we have gained. We cannot afford to be relegated."

Lloyd has pinned his immediate future on the tie. "I am quite a proud individual," he said, "and I'm very self-critical. If I lose this tie, it will be my last match as captain. I won't hang around."

He is already thinking of venues and playing surfaces. "The South Africans are brought up on cement, so we don't want that," he said. "We have the option of either going indoors or playing on grass and grass is to our advantage." Lloyd believes Queen's Club could be the ideal venue. "We have to play it where the public can come and see it. I firmly believe the tie will be a sell-out and Queen's can seat 6,000 to 7,000."

Britain's only flaw is the lack of back-up. South Africa can call upon Ferreira, Marcos Ondruska, ranked 136, and David Nainkin, ranked 139, while their pairing of Adams and De Jager are No 5 in the doubles rankings. Without either Henman or Rusedski, the British team looks very weak indeed.

Lister searching for final flourish

SARAH POTTER



These days elite hockey players expect to carry their sticks for most of the year in pursuit of titles, cups and medals. Those in the eight-club women's Premier National League could, however, be forgiven for thinking that the final whistle should already have blown on a competition that started in October and finished almost a month ago.

This year, however, the English Hockey Association has called for extra time by deciding to use play-offs to find its champion. Slough, Ipswich, Highdown and Clifton must go first to Reading, on April 17, ahead of the final at the National Stadium in Milton Keynes in early May.

Sarah Lister, a former England and Great Britain midfielder who has played for Ipswich for 17 years, admits it is a little hard on Slough, who finished top of the league. "The side who goes through a whole season and comes out with more points than anyone else should be acknowledged as the true winners," she said.

The chance to travel the artificial turf of foreign lands — as Slough, the English champions, have been doing — is the prize at stake. "Play-offs are an exciting finale to the season," Lister said, "and it means the club who finished fourth still has a chance to win and qualify for the European club championship."



Lister has played for Ipswich for the past 17 years and is hoping to go out at the top

for injuries and jitters stalled their momentum, the Suffolk side looked like they would score the psychological goal by finishing top. "Because of the play-offs system," Lister said, "we wanted first or second place."

They now get two chances of reaching the final. Slough and Ipswich will play at Reading and the winner goes forward to Milton Keynes. The

victors from the other tie will play the losers of the Slough v Ipswich match to decide the other finalists.

Lister, 37, acknowledges her own stopwatch is ticking. "Realistically for me, we've got to win it this year," she said. "I want to compete in Europe again but I can't see myself playing any more after next season."

She has been here before.

for England but, as seasons began to overlap, was forced to choose. Stick beat bat, although last autumn she represented England in the first women's indoor cricket World Cup in Australia. "I was brought up in Yorkshire, so I have some regrets about cricket," she said. "The World Cup was fun, although we didn't do very well and the numbers playing in the indoor leagues seem to be in decline."

Hockey is a different story, where the elite become full-time professionals months ahead of the big events. "If we are going to compete with the best nations people can't train with full-time jobs," said Lister, a teacher at King Edward VI school in Bury St Edmunds.

'It's all about attitude and the capacity to push yourself further than anyone'

and I'm not sure all the youngsters fully realise that."

Lister hopes increased professionalism will not swamp old-fashioned sportsmanship. "The Premier League is highly competitive, which is why it's so prized," she said. "But I think sometimes things are carried off the field in a way they never used to be."

Top of Lister's list of happy moments is leading England out at the now defunct Wembley international and winning bronze at the Barcelona Olympic Games. "I used to go to the Wembley international on a school trip every year and it was everyone's dream to play there," she said. "The Olympics were probably my proudest moment and that feeling, standing on the medal rostrum, is unforgettable."

With her self-confessed "twilight zone" fast approaching, Lister knows one more national title would provide another notable landmark for her already glittering memory lane.

BOXING

Hamed's entrance may leave Ingle cold

By SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

THE special entrances of Naseem Hamed go down a treat with the punters and, more often than not, last longer than the main event. But when Hamed meets Paul Ingle, at the Manchester Evening News Arena on Saturday, the son of lumiere might not go down well with the Scarborough man.

Hamed's brother, Riath, the boxer's business manager, has planned a special entrance that will last around 15 minutes. "We have something special planned," he said. "Something that's not been done before."

However, Ingle will not wait in the ring more than five minutes for Hamed to start the fight and if he is kept waiting any longer he will go back to his dressing-room. "It takes more than five minutes, we're out of the ring," Frank Maloney, Ingle's manager, said yesterday. "This is not a gimmick. My fighter is not warming up in the dressing-room to get cold."

Maloney's non-complacent attitude was in keeping with his irritation after Hamed reminded him that Ingle had been knocked down in training in Pennsylvania. "If that happened in training, what would happen to him in the ring?" Hamed kept repeating throughout the final meeting between the two boxers in Manchester yesterday. Predictably, it was not long before the conference descended into a slanging match.

However, it was not Hamed who started the verbal punch-up. Matters came to a head only when Steve Pollard, Ingle's trainer, riled Hamed by asking him if he was in good health. Pollard said he did not want him to make any excuses after losing his title.

Ingle kept quiet. After 13 weeks of training he remains confident of beating the "unbeaten". He has £10,000 on himself to win at 5-1.

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King tests Hendry's powers of resilience

By Phil Yates

STEPHEN HENDRY, who has been happier with his game of late, once again demonstrated his resilience under pressure during a 5-4 victory over Mark King in the British Open at Plymouth yesterday. When Hendry, who did not enjoy the best of fortune in the early stages, went 4-2 down, King appeared likely to cause the biggest upset of a tournament which, generally, has followed the formbook.

The six times world champion compiled a 100 break in the seventh frame, won a scrappy eighth, after King had squandered two good scoring chances, and accounted for the decider in clinical fashion with a 137 total clearance, his 25th century of the season.

Hendry, who rallied from 8-4 down to beat Stephen Lee 9-8 in the final of the Benson and Hedges Irish Masters 12 days ago, drew considerable satisfaction from his fight-back. "It proves that my attitude is good and that I can do the business when I have to. That's always a good sign, especially at this time of year," Hendry, second favourite for the Embassy world championship, said.

Quarter-final opposition for him will be supplied by Anthony Hamilton, the world No 11, who put out Mark Williams, winner of the Irish, Welsh and Thailand Opens this season, by 5-4. Hamilton, who had a 134 total clearance in the second frame, was pulled back from 4-2 up to 4-4 and Williams led 3-0 in the decider, Hamilton replying with a run of 59 before potting the green for victory.

John Higgins, the holder, enjoyed a more straightforward passage. He was engaged for only 73 minutes in beating Michael Holt 5-1, after losing the first frame to a yellow to pink clearance.

Higgins, who has dropped only two frames in three matches, now meets Nick Walker or Brian Morgan while Peral O'Brien, the 5-2 conqueror of Gary Wilkinson, knows that further progress could well seal his place among the top 10 in the world rankings.

Oliver Holt says Juventus may regret their lack of ruthlessness

United draw comfort from escape

They are drawn to Juventus like moths to a flame — seeking the light, seeking the secret and always forgetting what it feels like to get burnt. Manchester United have become embroiled in a curious self-destructive flirtation with the Italian champions these past three years that bears all the hallmarks of unrequited love.

On Wednesday night we had been led to believe that the dynamic would change, that the admirers would become the admired, that United finally felt strong enough to stand up for themselves. Instead, when they went looking for approval, boasting about their new-found self-esteem, Juventus laughed in their faces.

In the first half, United watched helplessly as Juventus treated them to an exhibition in technique and possession football, just as they had two years ago, when they made United realise how far they had to travel before they had a chance of lifting club football's greatest prize.

In the end, English football was left clutching at those familiar straws of persistence and effort as *La Vecchia Signora* meted out her punishment for the impudence of suggesting that she had slipped into her dotage.

In Ukraine, Dynamo Kiev suffered for their inexperience, too, as Bayern Munich twice clawed their way back from two-goal deficits to draw 3-3. The Germans, who have not lost a match for five months and lead the Bundesliga by 16 points, are not only favourites



The Juventus wall eventually came tumbling down at Old Trafford, where Giggs's equaliser gave Manchester United late hope

to reach the European Cup final, they have also replaced United as favourites to win it.

If there is hope for United for the second leg of their semi-final, in the Stadio Delle Alpi on April 21, it does not spring from anything that happened at Old Trafford on Wednesday. There was nothing to suggest that United might be the equals of Juventus in Turin. The glimmer of encouragement comes from the fact that the complacency, almost the lethargy, that pervaded their performance.

from the laziness of their tactics to the carelessness of their passing and the overblown expectations of their supporters, has been banished.

Juventus came close to humiliating them. United knew that better than anyone. Zinedine Zidane, hobbling around on one good leg, ran rings round them. Edgar Davids outthought Roy Keane. Didier Deschamps turned poor Paul Scholes into the Invisible Man. United were lucky to escape with a 1-1 draw.

"Zidane was absolutely fabulous," Ryan Giggs, whose last-minute equaliser cancelled out Antonio Conte's first-half goal, said. "Playing like that when he was not supposed to be fully fit was unbelievable. How can they say there was something wrong with him? He has got strength, experience and a great touch with both feet. He was nothing short of magnificent."

The only way in which Zidane and his team-mates erred is that they did not kill United off. They have benefited from generosity like that

themselves this season as they scrambled their way to this stage of the competition. They, more than anyone, know the pitfalls in the abandonment of ruthlessness. So if United have anything to cling on to, it is that their opponents filed on to their coach not full of elation but aching with regret.

"We have not done enough to make sure we can get to the final," Davis said. "With English teams you only know you have won the contest when the whistle blows for the final time. It will be very hard for us

in Turin because United never give in. "Normally when Italian teams take the lead like we did they lock the door and throw away the key. But this time we gave United the key back. We saw the real United in the second half. After half-time they played with more aggression going forward and Giggs began to shine. He only really played for one half but he was superb when he got going."

"We will have to watch him carefully in the second leg. We know the tie is not over. United will have to come to Italy and do to us what we have just done to them. We will have to be very focused if we are to finish what we started."

Alex Ferguson, the United manager, was quick to launch his damage-limitation act. Fortified by United's 3-3 draw with Barcelona in the Nou Camp, their 2-2 draw with Bayern in the Olympic Stadium and by the fact that they are still unbeaten in the European Cup this season, he had a hunch, he said, that United could win the tie in Turin.

His theory is not totally implausible. Juventus have not played as they did at Old Trafford so far this season and they may not play like it again. It is too risky a strategy for them to play for a goalless draw and if Yorkie and Cole rediscover the rich vein of form that deserted them, United can reasonably expect to make a game of it. Next time, they will know better than to expect Juventus to slip meekly into subservience.

New kit unveiled, page 3

St Albans hoping for good luck to continue

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL
By Keith Pike

WHEN the draw for the semi-finals of the FA Umbro Trophy paired Cheltenham Town and Kingstonsian together in a heavyweight duel, it may have guaranteed that Wembley would welcome warm favourites on May 15, whoever delivered the knockout blow. It also ensured that one set of underdogs would have their day at the Twin Towers.

The first legs tomorrow feature a catchweight contest between St Albans City and Forest Green Rovers at Clarence Park, where a team that had never reached even the last 32 of non-league football's most glamorous competition hosts one that stands three matches away from a place in non-league history. In 1982, Forest Green, the unheralded club from deepest Gloucestershire, won the FA Vase, and no club has managed to capture both pieces of silverware.

St Albans, as the one member of the quartet from outside the Nationwide Conference, are the clear outsiders, but their run to the last four suggests that Garry Hill's team has the Midas touch in the Trophy. The Ryan League side was 20 seconds from elimination by Ashton United in the fourth round, overcame Dagenham and Redbridge in the fifth despite playing half the match without a recognised goalkeeper, and snatched a last-minute winner against Boston United in the quarter-final through Tom Meredith, a full back who arrived at the ground expecting to be dropped.

"We will just go out and play to our strengths, but we know that Forest Green are firm favourites and that we can't afford even one or two people having an off-day," Hill said. A key man will be Steve Clark, 35, the striker who has scored nearly 300 goals in 437 games for them.

Cheltenham, beaten twice in 16 games, the Trophy holders and with one hand on the Conference title, will be in good heart at Kingsmeadow, but if anyone is capable of plotting their defeat it is Geoff Chapple, the Kingstonsian manager, who led Woking to three Wembley triumphs between 1994 and 1997.

FOOTBALL IN BRIEF

Premiership clubs move into the final stages of the quest for trophies. The England coach, who leads the national team out against Hungary on April 28, said: "I've got my doubts about whether England should be playing a friendly. 'They are all coming to the vital stage of the season where they are playing for massive prizes and we say, 'well we'll take these four players'. That's a difficult one."

England were facing an early exit from the world youth championship after losing to Cameroon in their group E match in Kano, Nigeria yesterday. The England Under-20

team lost 1-0 to a 64th-minute Gaspard Komol goal. In their opening match on Monday, England lost 1-0 to the United States and are bottom of their group.

Aston Villa confirmed yesterday that they have applied for a place in the InterToto Cup. Although the competition has been marginalised in recent years, it now provides another route into next season's UEFA Cup. Villa's move has been dictated by the new system of qualification introduced by UEFA. Instead of the team that finishes in fifth place in the Premiership gaining entry to the UEFA Cup, that

place has been allocated to Newcastle United, the FA Cup semi-finalists.

Fabian De Freitas, the West Bromwich Albion striker, has been fined two weeks' wages for failing to turn up in time for the Bank Holiday defeat at Crewe Alexandra. Denis Smith, the manager, said the player had apologised after thinking it was an evening kick-off.

Matt Jansen, the Blackburn Rovers forward, is not expected to play again this season because of injury. The England Under-21 player has suffered cartilage

damage in his knee and faces an operation.

Roy Hodgson, the former Blackburn manager, could be named as the new Austria manager next week. If Otto Baric, the favourite for the position, declines the offer, Hodgson, who has coached Switzerland at international level, could yet succeed Herbert Prohaska, who was sacked by the Austria Football Federation.

Joe Royle, the Manchester City manager, will begin his attempts to sign Terry Cooke on a permanent deal today. Cooke has been on loan at City, from Manchester United, but the loan spell expires on April 17.

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GROUP A DRIVERS			
01 M Hakkinen	41	05 A Zanardi	22
02 M Schumacher	106	06 J Villeneuve	19
03 D Hill	8	07 E Irvine	153
04 D Coulthard	28	08 O Pans	20
GROUP B DRIVERS			
12 R Schumacher	131	16 R Zonta	46
13 M Pironi	138	17 M Gene	15
14 A Wurz	35	18 J Trulli	30
15 T Takagi	124	19 R Barrichello	99
GROUP C CONSTRUCTORS			
23 McLaren	-20	28 Jordan	13
24 Ferrari	20	27 Benetton	15
25 Williams	14	28 Sauber	-20
GROUP D CONSTRUCTORS			
29 Arrows	21	32 Prost	-20
30 BAR	-30	33 Minardi	-20
31 Stewart	2		

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RACING 46, 47

Henderson putting his faith in nothing but the facts

SPORT

FRIDAY APRIL 9 1999

MOTOR RACING 47

Barrichello homing in on winning formula in Brazil



Confident Montgomerie makes encouraging start to 63rd Masters

Lyle puts troubles behind him with fluent 71

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT IN AUGUSTA

THERE is a Valhalla in golf in the United States, a place where ghosts of the past suddenly come to life. It is known as Augusta, Georgia, where yesterday Sandy Lyle rediscovered the form that he has not known for years.

It was extraordinary to watch the way that Lyle, walking with that heavy-footed stride of his, a towel around his neck to ward off the heat and cope with the oppressive humidity, managed to get round in 71, one under par, and be up with the leaders.

These days, indeed these past few years, the game has been so troublesome for Lyle that there have been many occasions when one has wondered why he has continued. A resident of Jacksonville, Florida, he makes occasional forays to Europe, but wherever he goes he seems to be a slightly forlorn figure. Until yesterday, that is, because in his best opening round here since 1988, the year he won, Lyle looked at times as he did of old.

Around him the ghosts were flitting to and fro. John Daly was one of the early leaders before finishing with a 72 and José María Olazábal, the champion in 1994, proved how these famous green acres can bring back memories that can be inspirational. A 70 for him put him one behind the early leader, Brandel Chamblee, who was three under par, as were Davis Love III and Scott



Lynne Truss 50
Early scores 50

McCarron, Tiger Woods, the 1997 champion, however, took an eight at the par-five 8th hole and turned in 38, two over par.

Colin Montgomerie, Lyle's fellow Scot, whose public posture before the start of the 63rd Masters was one of bemusement mixed with depression, gave himself the sort of start he was desperate for making only one mistake and finishing, like Olazábal, with a 70.

Lyle's troubles seemed to have increased when, on Monday, word reached him and his wife, Jolande, that their nanny and two children had been involved in a car crash in Florida. Mercifully it was not too serious.

Lyle was plugged in a bunker on the 4th for the first of his two bogeys, but then sank a 12-foot putt for a birdie on the 5th and somehow coasted in a curling 12-footer on the 7th. Although he missed the green on the 9th, he played a



Montgomerie, who got the start that he wanted with a first-round 70, two under par, plays his approach to the 2nd green at Augusta yesterday

magnificent wedge from the fringe of the green to within an inch of the hole to turn in 35. After all this, he looked less like the forgotten man of Europe. But after a good outward nine he still had a fight on his hands.

The 12th, perhaps the most difficult short hole in golf, caught him out when his tee-shot trickled through the green, but any bad luck he might have had on this hole was given back on the next, when his ball did not roll back down the bank into Rae's Creek.

It took a good putt of ten feet or so from the fringe of the green for him to get his par on the 16th and his chip from the back of the 17th popped into the hole and came out again. It was a Lyle the likes of which has not been seen for a long time who made his way up the 18th, where his drive ended near where it had in 1988. He then hit a magnificent five-iron to a flag that was positioned on the back right-hand corner of the green. In a mood such as he was in he was always likely to hole the ensuing five-footer, and so he did.

Montgomerie might have been even happier than Lyle, but you would not have known it from his demeanour at the end. It had been a round in which he had made only one mistake, when he took three putts on the 6th. It was, he said, exactly the start he had been looking for. "The man who wins this will be the one who makes the least mistakes, not the one who gets the most birdies," he said. "The course is only going to get tougher and tougher. I am a bit more confident than I've been in the past. The width of

the fairways and the new rough means more than they did before."

There is increasing evidence that he is coming to terms with a course that has beaten him in the past — or so he has thought. In fact, his eighth-place finish last year was not only his best here, but his best in any of the major championships in 1998, and his last two rounds of 69 and 70 were as well as he has managed at that stage of the tournament.

Such was Montgomerie's determination not to be carried away that he failed even to

remember a magical shot he had played on the 4th, when, having driven over the back of this tricky par-three, he somehow got the ball close enough to hole for a par. Steve Jones, a playing partner, bowed in mock admiration. A home-ward nine of 33 on a day when all competitors were finding the capricious wind making the course difficult was a score to send even Montgomerie happily in for a late lunch.

Ferguson hoping to attract Zidane

BY OLIVER HOLT
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

MANCHESTER United have made the first move in an attempt to secure the services of the player who has driven them to the brink of elimination from the European Cup by inquiring about the availability of Zinedine Zidane.

Zidane, the man who scored two goals for France against Brazil in the World Cup final last July and was voted the world's best player by Fifa earlier this year, orchestrated the masterly Juventus performance that resulted in a 1-1 draw with United in the first leg of their semi-final on Wednesday night.

Alex Ferguson, the United manager, has expressed his admiration for the Frenchman many times and it is believed that members of the Old Trafford board met their Juventus counterparts before Wednesday's game to register their interest should the player become available.

It is likely that Zidane will leave the Italian champions at the end of the season, partly be-

United draw comfort 48

cause of his disillusionment about the turn events in Turin have taken, partly because his wife has become bored of life in the city.

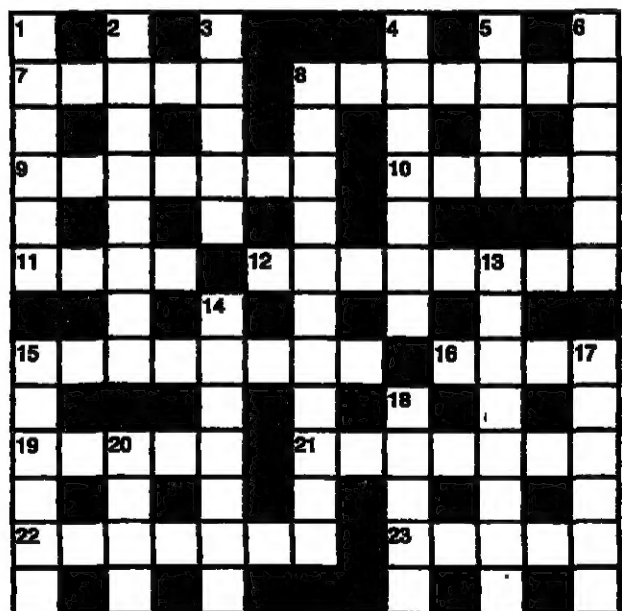
It is thought that Zidane, who was the best player on the pitch on Wednesday night despite the fact that his right knee was heavily strapped and he was clearly not fully fit, would cost United a fee somewhere in the region of £18 million.

Undoubtedly, he would give them the guile and the presence on the ball in the centre of midfield, the ability to dictate the pace of the match, that is the one quality United still conspicuously lack.

Ferguson has already joked about moving Old Trafford to the seaside to accommodate the wishes of Zidane's wife, who has expressed a preference for living in a coastal city, and the Frenchman may be more tempted by the lure of a club such as Barcelona.

The suspicion remains, though, that he is the type and the quality of player that United must attract if they are to take the final, elusive step towards being the best club side in Europe.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1687

- ACROSS
7 Stagger: (left in) trouble (5)
8 Sitting-room (once) (7)
9 Aspirant (eg pop-singer, film-star) (7)
10 Saturn moon; huge, important type (5)
11 A medicine (4)
12 Statue base (8)
15 (Voice) artificially high (8)
16 A fruit; desirable job (4)
19 Check of books (5)
21 Outstanding performance: Cornwall, for Gloucester (Leas) (7)
22 Seridom (7)
- DOWN
1 Imperfect (6)
2 Peaceful (8)
3 One playing unfairly (5)
4 Saily, knot-shaped biscuit (7)
5 Carbon specks (4)
6 GWR engineer (6)
8 Fit to be seen (11)
13 Speak condescendingly (4,4)
14 Subhuman (7)
15 (Flesh) not firm (6)
17 One dying for beliefs (6)
18 Young female horse (5)
20 Drift of sand (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1686
ACROSS: 1 Stammer 5 Shod 9 Admin 10 Boulder
11 Self-portrait 12 Basics 13 Broody 16 Living fossil
19 Involve 20 Ozone 21 Lido 22 Take-out
DOWN: 1 Sway 2 Aimless 3 Munificently 4 Ribbon
6 Hydra 7 Dorothy 8 Culture shock 12 Balliol 14 Orinoco
15 Effect 17 Vivid 18 Seat

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Australia fightback masks burning issues

FROM PAT GIBSON
IN ANTIGUA

IT IS the way of cricket these days that West Indies and Australia barely have time to reflect on a Test series that had to be seen to be believed before embarking on an island-hopping excursion around the Caribbean crammed with seven one-day internationals.

As Steve Waugh, clutching the Frank Worrell trophy which he had just managed to hang on to in his first series as Australia's captain, said: "It's hard to put it all into perspective right now. There were so many times when we thought we were going to win a Test and then they thought they were going to win it. I am not really sure why it was so up and down."

Australia had West Indies on the floor in Trinidad, where they collapsed to their lowest Test score of 51, were staggered themselves by two monumental innings from Brian Lara, in Jamaica and Barbados, and then came back to outpoint their challengers emphatically in Antigua.

It was the most compelling cricket, yet when it was all over, neither side was entirely satisfied. Australia, sustained by the steadfast Steve Waugh, felt that they could have won all four Tests; West Indies, inspired by Lara, believed the momentum he had generated would keep them ahead.

Both now have problems to address for the simple reason that the series was dominated by five great players — Lara, Curtly Ambrose and Courtney Walsh of West Indies, Steve Waugh and Glenn McGrath of Australia — and they cannot

end he was getting most things right.

"I am the first to admit that I am going to have to learn as a captain," he said. "It was a bit much to expect me to pull all the right strings straight off, but I expect to improve in every game and I think Antigua was the best I've done."

As for Lara, he seems to be growing up at last. He looked like a little boy lost when he was presiding over the sham-bolic 5-0 whitewash in South Africa, but he lifted not just his team but the entire region with the glory of his batting.

"We always knew that it was going to be tough for us playing against the world champions in the last Test," he said, "and they proved to be better than us, but I am very optimistic about the future. As time goes on we are going to be a much better unit and a force to be reckoned with once more."

There are going to be significant changes in West Indies cricket as the president of the board, Pat Rousseau, who has been embarrassed by many of the decisions taken by the people around him, assembles a new structure.

The positions of Clive Lloyd, the team manager, and Malcolm Marshall, the coach, are among those under review, but one man is sure of his tenure. Lara, a perceived delinquent in need of corrective training when he was put on probation for the first two Tests, is now master of all he surveys from his home in the hills above the Caribbean.



Lara: growing into role

England turn to Mather

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ENGLAND will introduce two newcomers in their search for the grand slam against Wales at Wembley on Sunday, the final day of the Five Nations Championship. Barrie-Jon Mather will join Steve Hanley, his Sale colleague, after the withdrawal through injury yesterday of Jeremy Guscott, England's longest-serving player.

At 6ft 6in and 16st 4lb, Mather, 26, must have a claim to be the biggest back to appear in an England jersey. He played in the second row for England Schools before moving to play rugby league for Wigan in 1991, winning England and Great Britain caps at wing or centre.

With Will Greenwood, of Leicester, and Phil de Glanville, of Bath, long-term casualties, Mather understudied Guscott in training this week before the Bath player conceded that his strained hamstring would not allow him to make his sixtieth appearance for his country.

Mather wins preference over Nick Beal, the Northampton utility back, who played at centre during the southern-hemisphere tour last summer. Tony Underwood, the Newcastle wing, has been added to the replacements.

Mather will be the sixth Sale player to have been capped by Clive Woodward, the England coach, five of them backs.

Code-breaker, page 49

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